

*DECAMERONS* WITHOUT WOMEN:  
THE SPIRITUALIZATION OF ITALIAN LITERATURE IN THE SIXTEENTH AND  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

by  
Alyssa Falcone

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland

April 3, 2017

## Abstract

This dissertation takes Francesco Dionigi da Fano's 1594 *Decamerone Spirituale* as the prime example of the many 'spiritualizations' of classics of Italian literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The author, in an attempt to 'repair' the 'sinful and deeply flawed' *Decameron*, removes all female storytellers and characters and presents an exaggeratedly devout, misogynistic, anti-Boccaccian *Decameron* that offers no attribution to the original author among its 700-plus pages of *ragionamenti spirituali*. Despite Dionigi's endeavor to displace Boccaccio's famous work and showcase his own original, devotional writing, he essentially copies the structure and syntax of Boccaccio's macrotext, sometimes verbatim, and sells himself as the new-and-improved Boccaccio. Apart from analyzing the text in terms of authorship, authorial identity, plagiarism, and gender and sexuality in the Counter-Reformation, I situate the *Spiritual Decameron* within the 'tradition,' or subgenre, of the spiritualizations of literature that proliferated during this period, especially in Italy, and analyze the objectives and motivations of the phenomenon.

Primary advisor: Dr. Walter Stephens

Secondary advisor: Dr. Christopher Celenza

Readers: Drs. Eugenio Refini, April Oettinger, and Leonardo Lisi

## Acknowledgments

There are quite a few people to whom I owe quite a lot of gratitude for their patience, presence, help and encouragement throughout the process of writing this dissertation. My advisors at Hopkins, Walter Stephens and Christopher Celenza, saw this project through from start to finish and continuously provided helpful feedback, gentle guidance, and manageable mountains of suggestions. Professors Pier Massimo Forni, James Coleman, Eugenio Refini, William Egginton, Laurie Shepard, Franco Mormando and Rena Lamparska shaped my ideas and taught invaluable courses from which I drew inspiration and material. Administrators from my department and from the Singleton Center helped me obtain funding to travel to Florence, Oxford, and Fano for research purposes.

My family and friends have provided countless hours of support, intellectual stimulation, diversion, comfort, feedback and kindness over the past two years; I can not thank them enough for all they have done. To Dan Rosenberg, Irene and Michael Rosenberg, Layla Houshmand, Victoria Fanti, Janet Gomez, Troy Tower, Lauren Judy Reynolds, Brandon Pelcher, Abby and Chris RayAlexander, Autumn and Alex Siquig, David Jacobs, Jacob Chilton, Nicole Berlin, and all other colleagues and cohorts at Hopkins and beyond: thank you and bless you. To my family, especially my parents, Susan and Michael, my brother Mark and sister Julia, and my many close relatives: thank you and I love you. To my late grandparents Giovannina (Jennie) Falcone, Tim Falcone, and Lucy Falcone: thank you and I miss you. And to the two people who started me down the path of Italian Studies in the first place, my grandfather, Domenic Falcone, and my undergraduate advisor, Alan Perry: *grazie infinite*.

### A Note on Translations

Where possible and necessary, I have provided translations of passages and citations into English from Italian, French, Spanish and Latin. With the exception of the *canzoni* in Francesco Dionigi's *Decamerone Spirituale*, I have chosen not to translate some passages of poetry, mostly because I feature the poetry for means of comparison(s) of syntax and not for the content within. In Chapter 2 I include large passages from the *proemio* and Introduction of the *Decamerone Spirituale*, which I also compare syntactically to corresponding passages from Boccaccio's *Decameron* to demonstrate excessive borrowing (and even 'plagiarizing') of the text; given that these passages are followed immediately by explications, I do not translate them. English translations of the entire text of the *Decameron* are available on Brown University's website, the "DecameronWeb" ([http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/texts](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/texts)). Finally, I have chosen not to translate the titles of works from their original language unless necessary for comprehension. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own and I take full responsibility for any and all errors within.

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Chapter One: Spiritualizations of Italian Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries	12
III.	Chapter Two: A Case Study: Francesco Dionigi's <i>Decamerone Spirituale</i> (1594)	59
IV.	Chapter Three: Spiritual Masculinities: Boccaccio's <i>brigata</i> vs. Dionigi's	104
V.	Chapter Four: Female Gender and Sexuality in the <i>Decamerone Spirituale</i> : From "lusinghevoli femine" to "nobilissime Donzelle"	139
VI.	Concluding Remarks	175
VII.	Appendices	181
VIII.	Bibliography	223
IX.	Curriculum vitae et studiorum	250

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b>	Frontispiece of the <i>DS</i> , showing the city of Fano	79
------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	----

## Introduction

In her 2015 book *The Ethical Dimension of the Decameron*, Marilyn Migiel confronts the question, “Is the *Decameron* immoral?” She responds: “Nobody asks that question anymore. Given that there is no religious or legal outcry about how the *Decameron* could threaten morality, scholars no longer need to defend the *Decameron* and its author” (7). Nearly seven hundred years after its initial publication, the *Decameron* exists in a very different world, yet a large portion of its content may still be considered too racy and too problematic to be enjoyed by certain audiences—for example, for students younger than middle-school age (12-14 years old), or as part of a religious education or seminary school. Notwithstanding the book’s raciness, libertinism, sexual themes or anticlericalism, Migiel is right to defend its overall moral message. She continues: “The moral message of the *Decameron* emerges in the narrators themselves (personifications of virtues and vices), in the attention Boccaccio pays to civic and political values, in the programmatic design of the *Decameron*, which highlights moral and family values, and in the war of virtue and vice throughout that culminates in a reflection on magnanimity” (7). Of course, this does not protect the work (or works similar to it) from being censored or banned from classroom usage. The *Decameron* is a fundamental part of the canon of Italian literature; however, books that are central to the American literary canon (e.g. *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) are frequently banned from school curricula even today due to the controversial language used within.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See Moriah Balingit, “School district weighs ban of ‘Mockingbird,’ ‘Huckleberry Finn’ after complaint,” *Washington Post*, 3 December 2016.

Boccaccio's Conclusion to the *Decameron*, in which he addresses his public in his own voice as an author, defends his text from his critics and detractors by highlighting the fact that the perceived moral value of the work depends solely on the morality of the reader. Millicent Marcus writes: "That words are morally neutral, and that their power to corrupt or enlighten is a function of the reader's own inner disposition to sin or virtue, makes interpretation an act of projection, the externalizing of inner forces onto the screen of the literary text."<sup>2</sup> Boccaccio's ten narrators (his *lieta brigata*) further promote this belief in the Introduction by insisting that the stories they will tell over the coming two weeks are neither prescriptive nor didactic, but rather, are meant only for entertainment purposes—to provide "pleasantries, among young folk, but not so young as to be seducible by stories."<sup>3</sup>

Entertainment, however, was seen in Boccaccio's time as a dangerous consequence of reading, especially for young readers, who are typically the most impressionable faction of society regardless of the century. Just as many today fear the effects on youth of playing violent video games, listening to aggressive lyrics in music, or watching pornography, the censors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries feared the consequences that reading such a libertine text would have on young readers. According to Brian Richardson, "A bishop condemned the work in 1759 as more dangerous to youth than the works of Luther and Calvin" ("Transformations of a Text" 15). Gabriele Paleotti points to the fact that books, particularly popularly received ones written in the

---

<sup>2</sup> Marcus, "Boccaccio and the Seventh Art" 271. She continues: "Boccaccio's defense of his project is to insist on the autonomy of his literary space, its freedom from the didactic expectations of the philosophers and the clergy, for whom the written word must serve the ideal of exemplarity, and to declare instead an 'imitation-free zone' for his garden writings, a space where the healthy reader can enjoy the pleasures of storytelling in full awareness of the gap between the world of imaginative free play and that of lived experience" (272).

<sup>3</sup> "sollazzo, tra persone giovani, benché mature e non pieghevoli per novelle" (*Dec.*, Proemio 7).



vernacular, “were dangerous because their impact was almost comparable to that of an image ‘which after one single look people are able to understand.’”<sup>4</sup> Popular vernacular works both threatened and undermined the Church’s authority by challenging its monopoly over the individualism and autonomy of its members; the *Decameron* was no exception to this phenomenon. The Council of Trent sought to regain this prior level of authority by establishing what Caravale calls a “series of repressive censorship decrees that ... regularly marked out the policy of opposition to any superstitious or pagan infiltrations that corrupted the texts and rites of Catholicism” (100). In doing so, the Church formulated a clear objective: regulate the images and messages the public received (mostly in the form of popular literature) and thus shepherd its errant congregation members back under its control.

This ambitious objective was only partially realized. While the success of the ‘conversion’ of readers from consumers of popular literature to pious, unquestioning church-goers is statistically unknown, the production numbers of books did indeed change.<sup>5</sup> The number of new editions of original works declined due to regulations

---

<sup>4</sup> Gabriele Paleotti, qtd. in Giorgio Caravale, “Illiterates and Church Censorship in Late Renaissance Italy” 96.

<sup>5</sup> See Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy*. Arturo Graf confirms that the main objective of the spiritualizations I will discuss in this dissertation was, indeed, a type of attempted conversion: “Questa operazione dello spiritualizzare consisteva nel togliere ad uno scrittore quanto nelle opere sue ci fosse di men che onesto, o di semplicemente profano, con sostituirvi una sostanza nuova di cose e di pensieri in buon accordo con la morale e con la fede. Era una specie di conversione che si operava nei libri. Si lasciavano intatte quanto più era possibile le forme, ma ci si metteva dentro un’anima nuova; si allettava i lettori con l’esca di un titolo famoso e, usando di una pietosa frode, si metteva loro tra mani un libro che veniva a dire il contrario di quanto aveva detto insino allora” [“This operation of spiritualization consisted of removing from one writer that which, in his works, was less than honest, or simply profane, and replacing it with a new substance of things and thoughts in agreement with morality and faith. It was a kind of conversion that happened in books. They left the form intact as much as was possible, but put into them a new soul; they baited the readers with the decoy of a famous title and, using pitiful fraud, put into the readers’ hands a book that came to say the contrary of what had been said up to that time”] (Graf 77-78).

passed by the Council of Trent and the Roman Inquisition, and readers who owned copies of these works faced harsh legal consequences for possessing them in their homes or reading them in public.<sup>6</sup> These measures also kicked off the spiritualization ‘movement,’ as I define it: the production of hundreds of ‘repaired’ works that often had very little literary (or monetary) value, but which claimed to be morally superior to the original works they spiritualized. Amedeo Quondam attributes the beginning and rise of this type of production to the Giolito publishing house in Venice in the 1550s.<sup>7</sup> This ‘spiritual writing,’ Quondam writes, was nothing but an attempt to provide Christian readers with an alternative to the ‘dangers’ of popular literature by evangelizing works with which they were already familiar. Coupled with low production costs and a chance for lesser-known Christian authors to showcase their writing, the works were initially seen as a worthwhile investment for publishing houses.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, as was the case for Francesco

---

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*.

<sup>7</sup> See Quondam, “Note sulla tradizione” 162: “L’esplosione del nuovo libro spirituale nell’età del rinnovamento cattolico può essere, però, emblematicamente (e produttivamente) rappresentata dall’impresa editoriale dei Giolito, sempre a Venezia: per iniziativa del grande Gabriele, a partire dal 1556, l’azienda pubblica da sola, nel corso della seconda metà del secolo, un centinaio di edizioni che recano la connotazione di ‘spirituale’ nel frontespizio” [“The explosion of the new ‘spiritual book’ in the age of Catholic renewal could be, however, emblematically (and productively) represented by the editorial endeavor of the Giolito family in Venice: by the initiative of Gabriele [Giolito], departing from 1556, the house published on its own, in the course of the second half of the century, hundreds of editions that bear the connotation of ‘spiritual’ on the frontispiece”].

<sup>8</sup> Quondam, “Note sulla tradizione” 165-66: “Il libro ‘spirituale’ cerca di approssimarsi allo spazio in cui vive il moderno cristiano: a ulteriore riscontro di quanto la missione tridentina sia proiettata alla nuova evangelizzazione ... e di come sia in grado di progettare e realizzare strumenti opportuni, e sempre nuovi, per le pratiche devote del cristiano contemporaneo, e in particolare questi libri ‘spirituali’, che per lo più presentano peculiari caratteristiche materiali. Sono infatti piccole stampe di basso costo, che non richiedono cospicui investimenti per la loro produzione tipografica (di macchine e uomini, oltre che di carta) e che possono essere smerciate direttamente nel territorio circostante al luogo di produzione, anche perché talvolta sono scritte da religiosi attivi e ben noti nel territorio circostante” [“The ‘spiritual’ book seeks to approach the space in which the modern Christian lives: a further confirmation of how much the Tridentine mission was projected toward the new evangelization ... and of how it was able to design and implement appropriate and new tools for practices devoted to the contemporary Christian, and in particular to these ‘spiritual’ books, that for the most part present peculiar, characteristic materials. They are, in fact,

Dionigi da Fano, who spiritualized the *Decameron* in 1594, the *libro spirituale* was a failed economic enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

The most common ‘problem’ that these spiritualized texts aimed to correct and excise from the original texts was the presence of sex and sexuality; secondary was the problem of the negative representation of religious figures and inherent anti-clericalism. Since the problem of sex and sexuality in a text mostly depended on the presence of women, this was an easy fix: remove women as characters, or simply reduce their overall participation in the text. This was Dionigi’s primary objective in assembling an all-male *brigata* and reducing the women in his *ragionamenti* to mere examples of good and bad behavior in society. As for the problem of anticlericalism, this was also fairly simple: no religious figure that appears in the *ragionamenti* of the *DS* has enough agency to ruin the reputation of the Church. In Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, characters who are friars, priests and mendicants commit nearly all of the deadly sins, of which lust, gluttony, avarice and pride are the most represented.<sup>10</sup> In erasing these stories and characters altogether, Dionigi neutralizes the threat they pose to readers and presents a purer, more well-intentioned text to his audience.

There is much information to be taken from this text; however, gleaning more information about the authors of the spiritualization ‘movement’ is extremely difficult. Finding a date of birth or death for the primary focus of my dissertation, Francesco

---

small prints of low cost, that do not require substantial investments for their typographical production (of machines and men, as well as paper) and which can be marketed directly in the area surrounding the place of production, also because at times they were written by active and well-known religious men in the surrounding area”].

<sup>9</sup> Henceforth I will refer to Dionigi’s work (the *Decamerone Spirituale*) as the *DS*.

<sup>10</sup> See Nicholas Havely, “Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Friars” 260. Havely continues: “Boccaccio’s friars, as practitioners of fraud and hypocrisy, mostly inhabit the *malebolge* of his comedy’s underworld, whilst monks, nuns and hermits, on the other hand, seem to be consigned only to its outer circles” (261).

Dionigi, is virtually impossible. Using paratexts such as prefatory material and dedicatory letters yields even less insight into the authors' personalities: even if we can use these texts to piece together a persona, we are more than likely dealing with self-descriptions full of exaggerations and false humility rather than factual, autobiographical details. It is not clear whether the 'personalities' that emerge from these paratextual materials are crafted or genuine; for the most part, they are molded to appease the author's patron, to reveal the motivations of the text, and, more often than not, to adhere to Inquisitorial standards. Regardless of the persona presented by these authors, their motivations are uniform: in the words of Giovanni Varisco (the printer of the *Decamerone Spirituale*), the new text purports to "scacciare il vitio" of the old text and, in its place, "introdurre la virtù."

The main priority in both the spiritualizing and expurgating of a text was to eliminate the parts that celebrated or promoted sinfulness, especially in the form of female sexuality. For works like the *Decameron*, this was almost impossible to do without scrapping the entire original text and starting over, which is the project that Dionigi undertook. Despite the fact that this activity involved essentially erasing female characters altogether, Virginia Cox does not view the overall attitudes of the Counter-Reformation period to be sweepingly misogynistic, since women in real life, who were producing literature and joining academies, enjoyed (almost) as much prestige as male intellectuals at the time.<sup>11</sup> In fact, she argues, "we are more likely to find profeminist

---

<sup>11</sup> "Beyond the question of women's concrete social position, how true is it that the Counter-Reformation sponsored an ideological renaissance of misogyny, as has very often been suggested? It is certainly true that sexual morality figured significantly as a concern within the project of ecclesiastical reform put in place by the Council of Trent. It is also true that the rhetoric associated with this moral reform often posited women as agents of temptation, witting or otherwise. This was in large part the logic of the drive to conventual claustration, as well as the reorganization of church and confessional space pioneered

views among Counter-Reformation clerics with close ties to the world of the secular courts, in which a reputation for gallantry was socially advantageous, and relationships with female patrons often had a key role in male intellectuals' strategies for social advancement" (*The Prodigious Muse* 22). Regardless of their social esteem outside the boundaries of written word, women, as characters in literature, still suffered.

The religious authorities who were responsible for the banning of certain works of Italian literature during and after the Council of Trent (especially the *Decameron*) subsequently, albeit mostly indirectly, caused the need for these works to be purged and rewritten. Pope Clement VII inaugurated the censorship and banning of books in 1531.<sup>12</sup> Eleven years later, in 1542, Paul III established the Sacred Congregation of the Roman Inquisition, whose primary objective was to suppress both the production and consumption of 'dangerous' and immoral books; it was also during his papacy that the Council of Trent first met, in 1545. Paul IV published the first Index of Prohibited Books (*Index Auctorum et Librorum Prohibitorum*) in 1559, which included the *Decameron* "on the grounds of its 'intolerable errors'—especially its often unflattering portrayals of the clergy and their practices."<sup>13</sup> The Index listed hundreds of works that were either to be

---

by Carlo Borromeo in Milan. Obviously, the notion of female sexuality as a dangerous force demanding strict social discipline was hardly new or specific to Counter-Reformation Italy, but it did attain a particular cultural purchase at this time" (Cox, *The Prodigious Muse* 21).

<sup>12</sup> See Vittorio Frajese, "Note su Machiavelli: editoria e cultura nell'Italia del Rinascimento e della Controriforma" 136: "...nell'atmosfera culturale della penisola cominciava a manifestarsi quella connessione tra diffusione dell'evangelismo, impulsi di riforma cattolica e risposta controriformistica della monarchia pontificia che contrassegneranno il futuro svolgimento del secolo" ["...in the cultural atmosphere of the peninsula a connection began to manifest itself between the diffusion of evangelism, the impulses of Catholic reform and the Counter-Reformation response of the pontifical monarchy, which would characterize the future development of the century"].

<sup>13</sup> Richardson, "The Textual History of the *Decameron*" 45. This Index (also called the Pauline Index) appeared in 1557, but was withdrawn soon after and replaced by the final first version in 1559. The Index underwent myriad revisions and re-publications over four centuries and was finally abolished in 1966 by Pope Paul VI. It is not to be confused with the Tridentine Index, which was published under Pius IV in

banned completely from publication and circulation, or forbidden from publication unless they were eventually revised or purged (or, at the very least, if they appeared sufficiently purged on behalf of the Holy Office).<sup>14</sup> The Sorbonne in France also served as a censorial institution in the sixteenth century. Francis Higman calls the Sorbonne “both the most systematic and the most prestigious authority for the control of works in French.”<sup>15</sup>

Boccaccio’s *Decameron* was placed on the Indices of Rome (1557, 1559, and 1564), Portugal (1551) and Spain (1559) (Bujanda 159). These are two listings of the *Decameron* among the first Pauline Indices:

[1564] Boccacii Decades seu Novellae centum, quamdiu expurgatae ab iis, quibus rem Patres commiserunt, non prodierint.

[1559] Boccatii Decades seu Novellae centum, quae hactenus cum *intollerabilibus erroribus* impressae sunt, et quae in posterum cum eisdem erroribus imprimentur. (Bujanda 384; italics mine)

Both contemporary and modern critics have found fault with these harsh rulings, especially since banned works like the *Decameron*, as well as *Orlando innamorato* and *Orlando furioso*, were “favole” and not meant to be taken as seriously as historical or non-fiction works.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, according to Giorgio Caravale, the act of banning of

---

1564 as a less harsh revision of the original Pauline Index, nor with the Leonine Index published by Leo XIII in 1897 (Encyclopedia Britannica). See Ugo Rozzo, “Italian Literature on the Index” for more information.

<sup>14</sup> The phrases that frequently accompany the titles of the books are *donec corrigatur* (forbidden until corrected) or *donec expurgetur* (forbidden until purged). See Richardson, “Transformations of a Text” 11-12.

<sup>15</sup> Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne* 9. Higman notes that other inquisitorial groups and universities contributed to the strict censorship of books at this time, but none so much as the Sorbonne: “Both on account of its international reputation, and by the extent of its listings (some 162 titles in French), the catalogues of censored books issued by the Sorbonne provide by far the most extensive field for survey.”

<sup>16</sup> “Au cours des travaux de la commission ... le commissaire général Ghislieri écrit le 27 juin 1557 à l’inquisiteur général de Gênes: ‘Col proibire Orlando [Innamorato e Furioso], Orlandino [del Folengo], Cento novelle [Decameron] e simili altri libri faremmo piuttosto ridere che altro, perché simili

books in general contributed to a “climate of cultural oppression” that affected not only intellectuals who owned and read these works, but also the lower classes and the illiterate.<sup>17</sup>

Andrea Sorrentino considers the spiritualized works of Italian literature—especially the *DS*—that emerged in response to ‘problem texts’—to be one of the most genuine characteristics of the Counter-Reformation period (218). To Sorrentino, the *Decamerone Spirituale*, despite being a “monstrous imitation” of the *Decameron* and an attempt at spiritualizing the work that succeeded only nominally, is meaningful for its conservation efforts of the Boccaccian text.<sup>18</sup> Dionigi’s overall aim was, in all likelihood, to ‘rescue’ the *Decameron* from its placement on the Pauline Indices and its outright banishment from circulation; that is, he may have wanted to conserve the text by repairing it while others were seeking to ban it outright. His efforts, and those of many

---

libri non si leggono come cose a cui si abbia a credere, ma come favole e come si leggono anche molti libri dei gentili come Luciano, Lucrezio ed altri simili’ [‘During the work of the commission ... Commissioner General Ghislieri wrote on 27 June 1557 to the Inquisitor General of Genoa: ‘Prohibiting *Orlando* (*Innamorato* and *Furioso*), the *Orlandino*, the *Decameron*, and other similar books would make others laugh at us more than anything else, because one does not read these types of books as things which one should believe, but as fables and as one also reads many books of pagans such as Lucian, Lucretius, and others like them’]” (Pastor, *Histoire des papes* XIV: 223n3; P. Paschini, “Letterati ed indice nella Riforma cattolica in Italia” 239, both qtd. in Bujanda 32).

<sup>17</sup> “In cultural terms, censorship inflicted its most severe damage on the ignorant and illiterate, on those social categories that were unfamiliar with Latin and did not habitually frequent the courts or academies” (Caravale, “Illiterates and Church Censorship” 93). In regards to courtly intellectuals: “The climate of cultural oppression influenced the general outlook of contemporary intellectuals, their moral fibre, as it were, but did not condition their actual access to important areas of Italian and European culture” (94).

<sup>18</sup> “Si tratta di una imitazione mostruosa, che in se stessa non è imitazione ma conservazione di uno schema che deve servire—soltanto nominalmente—a spiritualizzare il *Decamerone*. Nella storia delle lettere non si trova un artificio del genere. E così il cattolico autore tira giù un libro che, in estensione, è quasi il doppio del *Decamerone* boccaccesco ... Ma quanto diversa musica!” [“This is a monstrous imitation, that in itself is not an imitation but a conservation of a framework that must serve—at least nominally—in spiritualizing the *Decameron*. In the history of literature one cannot find a gimmick of the sort. And so the Catholic author produces a book that, in extension, is almost the double of the Boccaccian *Decameron* ... But what different music!”] (Sorrentino, *La letteratura italiana e il Sant’Uffizio* 218).

other authors who also spiritualized works at this time, should have proven beneficial to his pious readers, who (at least in his hopeful imagination) would read these works in order to edify themselves morally.<sup>19</sup> Despite all of its possible benefits, however, Sorrentino (who was writing in 1935) concludes his brief analysis of the *Decamerone Spirituale* by dismissing it from further study: in his opinion, it is a fruit that is out of season for literary scholars.<sup>20</sup>

So, why study this work, let alone write a dissertation on it? Quite obviously, I disagree with Sorrentino's evaluation of the *DS* (and works like it); I believe that spiritualized works of literature, despite their failure to proliferate, can tell us more about the changing landscape of a country's history than the fixed literary canon that we unquestioningly study and celebrate today. Only a handful of scholars have dedicated a minimal amount of attention to the spiritualization of literature in any century; almost none catalogues more than one author or focuses on more than one country.<sup>21</sup> The various themes I explore in my four chapters—gender studies in the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation periods, sainthood and martyrdom, authorship, copyright and plagiarism,

---

<sup>19</sup> “Leggere il *Decamerone spirituale*, per i bravi figli della Controriforma, sarebbe stato un esercizio di parecchie virtù mortificatrici, dalla pazienza alla tribolazione; benchè l'autore ritenesse di somministrare un pascolo gradito alle anime pie, tutto compreso—lui—a sfoggiare la sua erudizione biblica e patristica” [“To read the *Decamerone spirituale*, for the good sons of the Counter-Reformation, would have been an exercise in several humbling virtues, from patience to tribulation; even though the author considers himself to be offering a pasture pleasing to pious souls—including himself—and to be showing off his biblical and patristic erudition”] (Sorrentino 219).

<sup>20</sup> “Non sembra il caso di continuare, perchè si è davanti ad un frutto, per noi, fuor di stagione; ma la storia dello spirito spiega questo come tanti altri fenomeni. Umanità inquieta anche questa della Controriforma che al viso del più giocondo novellatore attacca la maschera della contrizione!” [“It does not seem the case to continue, because one is faced with a fruit that is, for us, out of season; but the story of the spirit explains this, as it does many other phenomena. Restless humanity, even this of the Counter-Reformation, that to the face of the most joyful storyteller attaches the mask of contrition!”] (Sorrentino 220).

<sup>21</sup> For example, Quondam only focuses on the spiritualizations of Petrarch; Puglisi, mostly on Ariosto and Boiardo; etc.



censorship, and so on—all enjoy a copious amount of scholarship across various disciplines. My project aims to tie all of these threads together around the text of the *Decamerone Spirituale*, which touches on all of them at one point or another. Dionigi's text sold so poorly in 1594 that his printer had to donate a number of copies to readers. In the following centuries, it was dismissed repeatedly by cataloguers and critics and exemplified as a warning against fixing what was not broken. Today, however, it is a treasure trove of historical, religious, societal, and literary information—a ripe fruit that begs to be picked and eaten.

## Chapter One:

### The Spiritualization of Italian Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

*"I see mountains of books so high that it makes my eyes tremble to look upon them ... I see Petrarch commentated ... Petrarch sullied, Petrarch totally robbed, the temporal Petrarch and the spiritual Petrarch."*  
-Niccolò Franco, *Le pistole vulgari* (1592)<sup>22</sup>

#### I. Introduction

Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1348–51) garnered a sizeable number of censored, reworked and rewritten editions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; other works that were heavily edited, especially for spiritual or moralizing means, at this time include Francesco Petrarca's *Canzoniere* and *Trionfi*, Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Pietro Bembo's *Rime*, and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and *Aminta*. Additionally, the spiritualization of literature was not confined to Italy and Italian authors: this behavior also occurred in France, Spain, and England around the same time. It is important to note that the editions and works I will examine in this chapter are not merely reactionary texts written in response to what was deemed morally transgressive literature; rather, they are either total rewritings of the original texts or imitations of the original texts that border on plagiarism. To be sure, it is important to keep in mind that, due to the relative newness of copyright laws in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the word 'plagiarism' and its implications differ greatly from how we define them today.

---

<sup>22</sup> "Veggio le cataste dei libri tanto alte, che mi tremano gli occhi a guardarci su... Veggio il Petrarca commentato ... il Petrarca imbrodolato, il Petrarca tutto rubato, il Petrarca temporale e il Petrarca spirituale."

It will also be important to understand these writers' definitions of moral and immoral subject material, or what makes a work of literature unacceptable to the public and in need of such major revision that the new work is almost a complete transformation from the original. We know that most of these writers were priests or other clergymen, and that they intended that their works be read by a largely male, Catholic audience as a means of spiritual edification. This is why, in most spiritualized works, female narratorial characters are typically removed and the females that remain in the text are used almost exclusively as examples. Despite the address of "Devotissime Donne" in the Introduction to Francesco Dionigi's *Decamerone Spirituale* (1594), his intended reader was likely *not* female, and thus not the intended beneficiary of these exempla.<sup>23</sup>

What was so repulsive about the original works that led them to be placed on Indices, banned, or rewritten? The explicitly sexual nature of the *Decameron*, in addition to its blatant anti-clericalism, was the main reason the work was placed on at least five Indices in the sixteenth century.<sup>24</sup> Petrarch's *Canzoniere* features 366 poems, roughly half of which are dedicated to a married woman the poet barely knows; only halfway through the songbook does he finally turn his attention to the appropriate recipient of love: the Virgin Mary. Boiardo's and Ariosto's epic tales of Orlando are rife with

---

<sup>23</sup> Boccaccio indicates that there are two different kinds of readers: "university educated males and untaught females: 'per ciò che né a Atene né a Bologna o a Parigi alcuna di voi [donne] non va a studiare, più distesamente parlar vi si conviene che a quegli che hanno negli studii gl'ingegni assottigliati' [...as none of you (women) goes either to Athens, or to Bologna, or to Paris to study, 'tis meet that what is meant for you should be more diffuse than what is to be read by those whose minds have been refined by scholarly pursuits'] (*Decameron*, Conclusion dell'autore 21). In other words, training makes readers autonomous, able to deal with texts offering little help. Other, less equipped readers (such as women) require generous guidance, which if incorporated, makes the text longer" (Usher, "Boccaccio on Readers and Reading" 2; trans. from DecameronWeb).

<sup>24</sup> The *Decameron* was placed on Inquisitorial Indices beginning in 1557 (the *Index Auctorum et Librorum Prohibitorum*, published by Pope Paul IV), and again in 1559, 1563, 1590 and 1593. The last two dates pertain to the Roman Index that was published but not circulated. See Bujanda.

wizardry, sex, and pagan gods and warriors. Although Tasso essentially takes matters into his own hands with his *Gerusalemme liberata* and (one could say) ‘spiritualizes’ it to make it the *Gerusalemme conquistata*, other authors take this one step further and create new works from the original texts with outrageous titles such as *Gerusalemme celeste acquistata* (Agostino Gallucci, 1618).

In this chapter, I will examine the changes these new authors made to the original texts and offer more reasons (other than the presence of sex, magic and paganism) as to why they undertook this endeavor. I aim to prove that the spiritualization ‘movement’ was not simply an innocuous attempt at ‘cleaning up’ the literature to make it acceptable for a more religious audience; rather, these authors were making clear antagonistic statements against the original authors, as well as against their works. I follow the opinions of Arturo Graf and Amedeo Quondam in their labeling of these works as “anti-Petrarch” or “anti-Boccaccio,” even naming the behavior *antiboccaccismo* and *antipetrarchismo*<sup>25</sup>—this, I believe, also holds true for the spiritualization of the other authors I have mentioned (Ariosto, Bembo, Boiardo, Tasso, etc.).

After the publication of certain works that I will be discussing (especially the *Decameron*), many responses to the texts were produced concerning their immoral nature or their unfair treatment of women. A number of these responses were made by women: for instance, Arcangela Tarabotti, Moderata Fonte and Lucrezia Marinella wrote treatises

---

<sup>25</sup> See: Graf, *Attraverso il Cinquecento*, and Quondam, “Note sulla tradizione della poesia spirituale e religiosa (parte prima)” 46: “Antipetrarchismo, nel Cinquecento, non vuol dire proprio proprio il contrario di petrarchismo. Se il petrarchismo importa, anzi tutto, una esagerata venerazione pel Petrarca, l’antipetrarchismo non include di necessità avversione al grande imitato, ma è più spesso semplice avversione alle dottrine, agl’intendimenti e alla pratica letteraria degli imitatori” [“Anti-Petrarchism, in the sixteenth century, does not exactly mean the opposite of Petrarchism. If Petrarchism brings, above all, an exaggerated veneration of Petrarch, anti-Petrarchism does not necessarily include aversion toward the imitated, but is more often a simple aversion to the doctrines, the intentions, and the literary practice of the imitators”] (Graf 46).

arguing for the reconsideration of a woman's worth, especially her worth in literature.<sup>26</sup> It was very rare for a woman to produce a spiritualization work in the same style as Dionigi or Gallucci, but this did happen, as is the case for Vittoria Colonna: Virginia Cox has written extensively on these women; so extensively, in fact, that I will not examine these female authors in the context of this subgenre.<sup>27</sup> As Cox has shown, women were highly influential in the proliferation of *rime spirituali*, *sacre rappresentazioni* and *commedie spirituali* at this time, and also provided inspiration for many of the male authors I will discuss.

## **II.2 Antagonisms of Italian Literature in the Sixteenth Century: Anti-Boccaccismo, Anti-Petrarchismo, etc.**

Critics have described the spiritualizing treatment that Italian texts received in the Cinque- and Seicento as being antagonistic and revisionist on the part of the new authors toward the original ones. If one considers the text of the *DS*, at first it appears to be a wholly new work: apart from the word *Decameron* in the title, the majority of the text looks to be original to Dionigi. However, since the *cornice* (framework) is nearly totally plagiarized save for a few changes in syntax, and since Dionigi gives no direct credit to Boccaccio as his source material, one would be correct to label it an antagonistic response to Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The same goes for Girolamo Malipiero's transformation of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* into the *Petrarcha Spirituale* (1587): Malipiero could have written completely original spiritual poetry, but chose instead to 'repair' the un-spiritual nature of Petrarch's songs and sonnets, and to publish a work that featured

---

<sup>26</sup> See Tarabotti, *Che le donne siano della spezie degli uomini. Women Are No Less Rational Than Men*; Fonte, *Il merito delle donne*; and Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*.

<sup>27</sup> See *The Prodigious Muse: Women's Writing in Post-Reformation Italy*.

him as the sole author while riding on the coattails of Petrarch's name. Graf notes that this was more than a simple improvement or rehabilitation of a text; it was, in effect, a way to substitute the new author's name for the original, and to eventually transform the text, either so subtly as not to make recognizable changes, or to completely overhaul it in the name of religion.<sup>28</sup> Malipiero even goes so far as to write into the text an imagined dialogue between him and Petrarch in which Petrarch begs him to spiritualize his work.

Cecilia Luzzi calls this type of spiritualization work a *travestimento*. In Italian, this word has a few slightly different meanings: it could signify a costume or disguise, or also mutation or mutilation.<sup>29</sup> Luzzi elaborates on the function of Malipiero's *travestimento* of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and on its precedence in musical and poetic works:

This work significantly anticipated two strands of religious and spiritual literature in the second half of the century: spiritual songbooks on the one hand, and spiritual 'disguises' of profane works. Here, the term 'spiritual disguise' usually refers to the practice largely applied, in music, of substituting texts with licentious character for texts with religious content, indicated by the formula 'one sings this like so...'. The textual opening of

---

<sup>28</sup> Graf 79: "Lo spiritualizzazione [del *Canzoniere*] non si esercita propriamente nel *Canzoniere*, ma fuori di esso, e i componimenti che ne nascono non han punto la pretesa di sostituirsi al libro onde traggono la sostanza. Di giunta in essi la parola del poeta rimane inalterata. Ma l'opera trasformatrice passa oltre, invade il *Canzoniere* stesso, e ne penetra tutte le parti, finchè riesce alla piena trasmutazione di esso" ["The spiritualization of the *Canzoniere* does not function exactly within the *Canzoniere*, but outside of it, and the components that are born from it have no point pretending to replace the book from which they derive substance. Other than this, the poet's words remain unchanged. But the transformation work goes beyond, invades the *Canzoniere*, and penetrates all of its parts, until it succeeds in fully transmutating it"].

<sup>29</sup> Graf also uses the word *travestimento*: "Antonio Cammelli, detto il Pistoja, ricorda in un suo sonetto certo predicatore che in pulpito *stracciava al Petrarca il mantello*. Il Pistoja non lo avverte; ma noi possiamo essere sicuri che costui predicava al deserto: altri, meglio avvisati, pensando che a voler mandare in bando il *Canzoniere* si sarebbe perduto tempo e fatica, credettero di conseguire più sicuramente il fine loro con sottoporlo ad un travestimento speciale che fu detto spiritualizzamento" ["Antonio Cammelli, called the Pistoian, tells in one of his sonnets of a certain preacher who in the pulpit *ripped the cloak from Petrarch*. The Pistoian does not say it; but we can be sure that this man preached to the desert: others, better advised, thinking that in order to ban the *Canzoniere* they would lose time and effort, believed to accomplish their ends more securely by placing it under a special disguise that was called spiritualization"] (Graf 77; italics in original).

the original *canto* refers, indeed, to the operation of rewriting poetic works designed to expunge that which was considered lewd or viewed with suspicion in the ecclesiastical sphere ... Malipiero's *Spiritual Petrarch* is certainly the most representative work of this type of production, in virtue of the interest that it aroused in its public of educated readers, clergy members, and devoted Christians, both for its many editions, but also for the circulation of its components in two comprehensive collections.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to clarify here that, in conjunction with the naming of these works as *spiritualizzazioni*, *libri spirituali*, *travestimenti*, or other classifications, the act of rewriting a work to transform it from profane to spiritual is also known as *contrafactum*. Although this is a musical term, in which new words are substituted for the original ones without substantial change to the music, it can refer to prose and poetry as well.<sup>31</sup> The inverse of this, in which authors turned spiritual works into profane ones, is commonly called sacred parody. While the sacred parody tradition also merits ample discussion, this chapter will focus solely on the *contrafactum*-type rewriting during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which Graf calls a “furia di spiritualizzare” (“spiritualization mania,” 78).

### III. The Spiritualizing Movement as Italian Cultural-Literary Phenomenon

#### III.1 Boccaccio

---

<sup>30</sup> “Quest’opera anticipava significativamente due filoni della letteratura religiosa e spirituale della seconda metà del secolo: dei canzonieri spirituali da un lato e dei travestimenti spirituali di opere profane. Qui il termine ‘travestimento spirituale’, solitamente riferito alla prassi largamente applicata in ambito musicale di sostituzione di testi dal carattere licenzioso con testi di contenuto religioso, indicando mediante la formula ‘cantasi come...’. L’*incipit* testuale del canto originario, è riferita invero a quelle operazioni di riscrittura di opere poetiche tese a espungere ciò che veniva considerato licenzioso o guardato con sospetto in ambito ecclesiastico ... Il *Petrarca spirituale* del Malipiero è certamente l’opera più rappresentativa di questa produzione, in virtù dell’interesse che indubbiamente suscitò nel pubblico dei lettori colti, chierici o cristiani devoti, per le molteplici edizioni, ma anche per la circolazione dei suoi componimenti in due raccolte collettive” (Luzzi, “Censura e rinnovamento cattolico nell’età della Controriforma” 11-12).

<sup>31</sup> For a deeper analysis of the distinction between *contrafactum* and parody, see Robert Falck, “Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification.”

Prior to large-scale spiritualizations and rewritings of the *Decameron*, a number of authors chose to edit the work in smaller ways—they would often change the subject matter of a few of the stories while maintaining Boccaccio’s structure, the general themes of the *novelle*, and most of the language and style of the text. These reworkings of the text, known as *rassettature*, were executed according to the orders set forth by the Council of Trent and were published in the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1573, Grand Duke Cosimo de’ Medici assembled a group of editors known as the Deputati, who were tasked with reorganizing the *Decameron*—that is, modifying the text without destroying it, as later authors would inevitably do.<sup>32</sup> Of this group’s productions, Vincenzo Borghini’s 1573 edition of the *Decameron* is one of the most well-known rewritten versions of the text today.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from the Deputati, two other sixteenth-century editors of the *Decameron* stand out: Lionardo Salviati (who published editions in 1582 and 1585) and Luigi Groto (1588, 1590, 1612).<sup>34</sup> The changes that Groto made to the *Decameron* are few, but troubling—for instance, according to Richardson, he changed clerical characters into secular ones and ‘punished’ the morally transgressive characters. Two of Salviati’s and Groto’s most altered *novelle* are those of Masetto da Lamporecchio (III.1) and Nastagio degli Onesti (V.8). The Deputati change Masetto’s monastery into a finishing school;

---

<sup>32</sup> See Richardson, “The Textual History of the *Decameron*.” The first members of the Deputati were Vincenzo Borghini, Pierfrancesco Cambi, and Sebastiano Antinori.

<sup>33</sup> Full title: *Il Decameron di messer Giouanni Boccacci cittadino fiorentino. Ricorretto in Roma, et emendato secondo l’ordine del sacro Conc. di Trento, et riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi & alla sua vera lezione ridotto da’ deputati di loro alt. ser. Nuouamente stampato.*

<sup>34</sup> Groto’s *Decameron* is entitled *Il Decamerone di messer Giouanni Boccaccio cittadin fiorentino. Di nuouo riformato da Luigi Groto cieco d’Adria ... Et con le dichiarazioni auertimenti, et vn vocabolario fatto da Girolamo Ruscelli.* Salviati’s 1582 edition is entitled *Il Decameron di messer Giouanni Boccacci, cittadin fiorentino, di nuouo ristampato, e riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi, & alla sua vera lezione ridotto dal caualier Lionardo Saluiati.*



Salviati turns it into a tower in Alexandria (and Masetto into a Jew).<sup>35</sup> In the case of Nastagio, Richardson notes that “[Groto’s] text is not altered but [he] repeats a marginal note from his source text, [Girolamo] Ruscelli’s edition of 1552, that warns that this is a ‘cantafavola’ and sets out the orthodox position on the spirits of the dead: they have no bodily form and are never allowed out of the place to which they are allocated” (“Transformations of a Text” 13). In other words, Groto issues subtle warnings to readers regarding the verity of these stories and therefore seeks to alter his readers’ comprehension of the tales (that is, with a perceptive, moralizing gaze).

Lionardo Salviati was called an “assassin of Boccaccio” for how much he censored the original text of the *Decameron*. Salviati replaces all offending material with asterisks; at times, the asterisks occlude so much of the page that the stories are almost illegible.<sup>36</sup> Although his primary aim was to salvage as much as the text as possible in terms of moral suitability, the text was ruined.<sup>37</sup> Richardson notes that, while the Deputati sought to preserve more of the text by merely changing a few clergy members into laypeople and not touching the majority of the content, Salviati went even further by “indicating disapproval of immoral behavior, for instance by removing stories from the

---

<sup>35</sup> Richardson, “The Textual History of the *Decameron*” 46: “The Deputati simply change the opening of the Masetto story [3.1] so that it is set in a sort of finishing school run by a widowed countess. They do not intervene in the story of Nastagio [5.8]. Salviati distances 3.1 further from Christianity: the convent in Tuscany becomes a tower in Alexandria where girls are kept before being sent off to the sultan of Babylon, and Masetto is a Jew whose real name is Massèt. [...] Groto turns the story of Masetto into a folktale, albeit a risqué one...”.

<sup>36</sup> “Gli interventi del Salviati sono tali da stravolgere il senso del testo originale e a volte da renderlo persino incomprensibile, come nella decima novella della terza giornata, dove il Salviati tenta di giustificarsi con questa nota: ‘Si lasciano questi fragmenti per salvare più parole e più modi di favellare che si può’” [“Salviati’s interventions are such that they distort the meaning of the original text and at times even render it completely incomprehensible, as in the tenth *novella* of the Third Day, where Salviati attempts to justify himself with this note: ‘One leaves these fragments in order to save the most words and the most ways of storytelling that one can’”] (Biblioteca Panizzi, “La letteratura al bando”).

<sup>37</sup> See Paolo Maino’s 2013 doctoral dissertation, entitled *La lingua della rassettatura del Decameron di Lionardo Salviati*.

Christian world to a pagan context, making some ‘wicked’ characters meet an unhappy fate, and adding marginal notes to draw attention to actions judged worthy or unworthy” (“Textual History” 45). The Deputati changed not only the religion of characters but also the certainty of Boccaccio’s own words to make them seem more hypothetical than conclusive. They also altered the conditions of the Masetto story (the nuns become the young daughters of the king of Sicily and his eight barons, who are locked away in order not to become pregnant before marriage). These changes were, relatively speaking, minimal and not harmful to the original text or to the readers; Salviati’s changes and marginal notes, on the other hand, press into the reader’s approach to the text and his or her moral interpretation of it.<sup>38</sup>

Following the production of these heavily censored editions of the *Decameron*, versions that were fully spiritualized (not just partially emended) emerged, albeit few and far between. The *Decamerone Spirituale*, which I will examine in the following chapter, appeared in 1594, and in 1745 Alessandro Bandiera published a work modeled after Boccaccio’s *Decameron* entitled *Gerotricamerone* (Greek for “three sacred days”).<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> “Ruscelli had used the margins to orientate readers linguistically; now Salviati used them primarily to orientate readers morally” (Richardson, “Editing the *Decameron*” 29).

<sup>39</sup> Full title: *Gerotricamerone ovvero Tre sacre giornate, nelle quali s'introducono dieci virtuosi, e costumati giovani, a recitare in volta ciascuno, per modo di spiritual conferenza, alcuna narrazion sacra. Opera d'Alessandro M. Bandiera sanese de' Servi di Maria, In Venezia: appresso Tommaso Bettinelli, 1745*. The license page that appears at the very end of the text reads: “NOI REFORMATORI / Dello Studio di Padoa. / Avendo veduto per la Fede di Revisione, & Approbazione del P. Frà Paolo Tomaso Manuelli Inquisitore del Santo Offizio di Venezia nel Libro intitolato *Gerotricamerone, ovvero tre sacre giornate, Opera di Alessandro Bandiera &c.* Non v'esser cos'alcuna contro la Santa Fede Cattolica, & parimente per Attestato del Segretario Nostro; niente contro Principi, & buoni costumi, concedemo Licenza a *Tomaso Bettinelli Stampatore di Venezia*, che possi esser stampato, osservando gl'ordini in materia di Stampe, e presentando le solite Copie alle Pubbliche Librarie di Venezia, e di Padoa. / Dat. il primo Ottobre 1744 ... Registrato nel Magistrato Eccellentiss. contro la Bestemmia” [“WE REFORMERS / of the University in Padua. / Having seen, for the Faith of Review, & Approbation of Father Paolo Tomaso Manuelli, Inquisitor of the Holy Office of Venice, in the Book entitled *Gerotricamerone, or Three Sacred Days, Work of Alessandro Bandiera, etc.* That there is nothing contra the Holy Catholic Faith, & equally confirmed by

Andrea Sorrentino calls Bandiera's work a "contrived and misguided imitation of Boccaccio."<sup>40</sup> This imitation covers the span of only three days; however, just as in Dionigi's *Decamerone Spirituale*, the *brigata* also consists strictly of men (their names are Eugenio, Eutassio, Teopisto, Agapito, Doroteo, Filalete, Teodoro, Pamfilo [also written as Panfilo], Timoteo, and Elpidoforo [also written as Elpideforo]). The narrators follow the same order for each of the three days; the kings are, respectively, Eugenio, Eutassio, and Elpidoforo. While each Day has an open theme, most of the 30 *ragionamenti* are stylistically very similar to those seen in the *Decamerone Spirituale*—they focus on the lives and martyrdoms of saints, good and bad examples of men and women (in history and in the Bible), and other various spiritual topics. For example, the rubric for the ninth *ragionamento* of the Second Day reads:

Mary Magdalene, wanting to disentangle herself from worldly lovers and turn her affection toward Christ, in doing so suffered a long and fierce conflict. Divine Love finally entering into her spirit, publicly triumphed over profane Love: thus she herself, having rejected every instrument and divided herself from mundane vanity, and in her modest comportment rendered humble service to Christ in the house of the Pharisee: her criminal behavior gives Christ room to magnify her love and declare her

---

Our Secretary; nothing contra Principles, & good habits, we concede a License to *Tomaso Bettinelli*, printer in Venice, that it can be printed, observing the orders in the material of Prints, and presenting the usual Copies to the Public Libraries of Venice, and of Padua. / Dated 1 October 1744 ... Registered by the Excellent Magistrate against Heresy"] (italics in original).

<sup>40</sup> "Affettatissima e storta imitazione del Boccaccio" (Sorrentino 216). Sorrentino does not offer much else in the way of criticism on this work, except to say that Bandiera "Ha rimosso con scrupolosa sollecitudine tutto ciò che potesse porgere incitamento al vizio, e quindi quei luoghi che dipingono più al vivo le disoneste passioni e che sembrano provocativi di carnale concupiscenza. La sua edizione del *Decamerone* vuol esser diretta ai giovani, ai quali si propone il parlar boccacevole come 'luminoso e perfetto esemplare da imitare'" ["Has removed with scrupulous promptness all that could be offered as incitement to vice, and thus those places that depict more vividly dishonest passions and which seem evocative of carnal lust. His edition of the *Decameron* is meant to be directed toward youths, to whom he proposes the Boccaccian way of speaking as 'luminous and the perfect exemplar to imitate'" (216).

pardoned of her sins: from then on she follows Jesus: and following his passion for solitude she exiles herself until death.<sup>41</sup>

The rubric for Day Three, third *ragionamento*, is also interesting: “A Heretical Woman, possessed by a Demon, by the intercession of St. Ignatius of Loyola is freed, and [upon] forswearing Calvinian heresy, turns herself Catholic” (283).<sup>42</sup> Calvinism is heavily criticized in this *ragionamento* and labeled a heretical doctrine (and its practitioners referred to as “perverse Calvinists” who must be “exorcised” of these possession-like thoughts). Bandiera categorizes his work as Catholic, and the title page states that he is of the order of the Servi di Maria (“Opera d’Alessandro M. Bandiera / Sanese / De’ Servi di Maria, / Lettore di Scrittura Sacra nella Cattedrale d’Osimo e di lingua Greca nell’Episcopal Seminario”).

Bandiera’s preface spans 31 pages and outlines his general motivations for composing the work, the most central being the faithful devotion to replicating the style of Boccaccio, that famous Tuscan writer (he repeatedly lauds the “gran Novellatore Toscano” and the “buone Toscane Lettere”) while simultaneously purging the perilous content of the *Decameron* to render it more consumable for devout readers. Here, the author explains his work to his readers:

Therefore, intending to make of this divisional work, as much as one can, a portrait similar to the *Decameron*: with timely occasion to reason I introduce ten pious and mannered young men, whom I make citizens of Cosmopolis (which in the Greek language sounds like *city of the world*),

---

<sup>41</sup> “Maria Maddalena volendosi da’ terreni amanti discioglierne, per rivolger l’affetto suo a Gesù, di ciò ne sostiene lungo e fiero contrasto. L’Amor Divino finalmente per entro al suo spirito, ed in pubblico di lei trionfa sopra l’Amore profano: quindi essa da sè rigetta ogni strumento e divisa di vanità mondana: ed in portamento dimesso presta umile ufizio a Cristo in casa del Fariseo: il cui reo sospetto porge a Cristo luogo di magnificare l’amore di lei, e dichiararle rimessi essere i suoi peccati: dipoi tien dietro a Gesù: ed appresso la sua passione in solitudine si ritrae fino alla morte” (Bandiera 192).

<sup>42</sup> “Una Dama Eretica dal Demonio invasata per intercessione di S. Ignazio di Lojola divien libera, ed abiurata la Calviniana eresia, si rende Cattolica.”

and I gather them in three spiritual conferences, divided evenly in the space of three days and held in a little villa during a lovely sojourn. And since in this Work one imagines that for some hours of the day they are occupied by sacred and devout reasonings, recounting each in his own turn some events, that they can make spiritual for the benefit of their listeners, over the span of three days, we have thus given it the title *Gerotricamerone*, which in Greek comes to mean *three sacred days* [...] I have placed the most diligent care (given that this is the prime and principal intention of this Work) in having them narrate [these stories] consciously, extending them with oratory artefice, and in retaining the propriety of the words and sentiments according to that which the reasoned topics require. To succeed at this, if it is possible, so that the aim of every artificial component is that the readers can glean enjoyment and delight without duty, where they like, and that they can get around the dangerous reading of the profane *Decameron*, where fantasy arouses them and generates in their minds less than honest thoughts. If for the imitation that I have undertaken I have confronted the focused sign, I place the responsibility of judgment on the wise reader.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the rest of the preface, other Tuscan and ancient Roman writers receive high esteem as well (e.g. Bembo, Giovanni della Casa, Cicero, Quintilian and Livy). Bandiera also features praises heaped on Boccaccio by these same writers, in addition to a few critics and historians. The preface comes to an end with Bandiera formally presenting his

---

<sup>43</sup> “Pertanto a intendimento di fare nell’Opera divisata ritratto, quanto per me si può, al Decameron simigliante: con opportuna invenzione a ragionare introduco dieci giovani pij e costumati, che cittadini faccio di Cosmopoli: la qual voce in Greca favella suona *città del mondo*, e li raccolgo in tre spirituali conferenze, ripartitamente nello spazio di tre giorni tenute in villereccio ameno soggiorno. E poichè in quest’Opera si finge che alcune ore del dì in sacro e divoto ragionar consumarono, contando in volta ciascuno qualche avvenimento, che tornar possa in ispiritual profitto degli ascoltanti, atteso il convenevole ripartimento dei tre giorni, le abbiamo perciò posto in fronte il titolo di Gerotricamerone, che nel Greco a dir viene *tre sacre giornate*. [...] Io soltanto studiosa cura m’ho posto (ciò che si è il primo e principale intendimento dell’Opera) in accionciamente narrarli, con oratorio artificio distenderli, e in serbare la proprietà delle parole e de’ sentimenti, secondo che le ragionate cose richiedono: per riuscire a quello, se possibil sia, che si è il fine d’ogni artificioso componimento, cioè ch’ e’ possano a leggitori recare giovamento e diletto, senz’ aver mestieri, dov’ essi vogliano, d’aggirarsi sulla pericolosa lettura del Decamerone profano, che la fantasia destar puote a generar nella mente men che onesti pensieri. Se per l’imitazione intrapresa io abbia sul mirato segno affrontato, nel leggitore saggio ne rimetto il giudizio” (Bandiera, n.p.; italics in original).

work to the “courteous Reader” and praying that his composition, written in the “sacred Tuscan Language” and in the style of Boccaccio is of good use to him.<sup>44</sup>

Other curiosities of this work are the activities in which the *brigata* engages in the interim between storytelling: for example, in the Introduction to Day Two, the men are described as drinking a “cameral beveraggio d’Americano licore” to ease their stomachs (120). The group does not flee from any sort of pestilence or tragedy; their decision to take a three-day sojourn to recount spiritual stories to each other is purely arbitrary. Cosmopoli, the city from which they depart, is fictional, and the villa at which they stay is surrounded by beautiful gardens, palaces, fountains, and forests full of birds singing sweetly. The men leave Cosmopoli alongside a few of their friends and family members (“con alcun de’ lor fanti, e familiari”), who are not mentioned again in the text, and return to a peaceful city.

### III.2 Petrarch

Before considering the works of Petrarch that were spiritualized in the sixteenth century, it is necessary to acknowledge Petrarch’s own efforts to ‘spiritualize’ both his own works and parts of Boccaccio’s. Petrarch’s Latin translation of the Griselda tale (*Dec.* X.10) is

---

<sup>44</sup> “Pertanto, o Leggitor cortese, quest’Opera vi presento, la qual ho con ogni possibile industria d’arricchir procurato con ciò che nella Lingua di più grazioso porgere mi potesse il Boccaccio colle sue Novelle, a intendimento, che fornir vi possiate di sacro Toscan Linguaggio, e agevole vi rendiate il tessere pij e divoti ragionamenti con far in essi buon uso delle sue ricchezze: acciocchè alla gloria del Signore ed all’ altrui Spiritual profitto servir facciate quelle grazie, e que’ vezzi, quelle leggiadrie e quelle dolcezze, che altri profani Scrittori rivolto hanno a incitamento di vizio, ed in arme rea del nemico infernale” [“Therefore, oh courteous Reader, I present to you this Work, which I, with every possible attempt to enrich it, have procured, and which, in the most gracious Language I could use, placed Boccaccio with his Novelle, with the intent of providing you with the sacred Tuscan Language; and thus you can easily make of them pious tesserae and devout reasonings, putting them and their riches to good use: so that for the glory of God and the other you can make Spiritual profit of these graces, and those vices, those pleasantries and those sweetnesses, that other profane Writers have used to incite vice, and in the evil hands of the infernal enemy”] (Bandiera, n.p.).

well known and documented in his *Seniles* letters. Upon reviewing the *Decameron*, he initially dismisses the bulk of Boccaccio's text, saying that it is "written in prose and for the multitude" and that he has been "occupied with more serious business" and could only peruse it "like a traveller." Although Petrarch admits that he was unable to fully enjoy (and analyze) the 100 tales in their entirety, he notes that the style and language that Boccaccio employs are to be commended. He acknowledges that Boccaccio wrote these tales at a relatively old age and adds that, when authors such as he and Boccaccio are writing for specific audiences, the style should be adapted to their tastes.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, Petrarch defends the work against Boccaccio's critics, calling them jealous, insolent and cowardly.<sup>46</sup>

In translating the Griselda tale into Latin, Petrarch took it upon himself not only to focus on the linguistic intricacies of the tale, and thus replicate them in his Latin version, but also to adapt the story morally for his readers. His motivation is clearly expressed in the same letter I have quoted above:

My object in thus re-writing your tale was not to induce the women of our time to imitate the patience of this wife, which seems to me almost beyond imitation, but to lead my readers to emulate the example of feminine constancy, and to submit themselves to God with the same courage as did this woman to her husband. (Musa and Bondanella 185)

---

<sup>45</sup> "My hasty perusal afforded me much pleasure. If the humour is a little too free at times, this may be excused in view of the age at which you wrote, the style and language which you employ, and the frivolity of the subjects, and of the persons who are likely to read such tales. It is important to know for whom we are writing, and a difference in the character of one's listeners justifies a difference in style" (*Seniles* XVII, 3; translation in Musa and Bondanella, *The Decameron: A New Translation* 184-85).

<sup>46</sup> "I have heard somewhere that your volume was attacked by the teeth of certain hounds, but that you defended it valiantly with staff and voice. This did not surprise me, for not only do I well know your ability, but I have learned from experience of the existence of an insolent and cowardly class who attack in the work of others everything which they do not happen to fancy or be familiar with, or which they cannot themselves accomplish" (Musa and Bondanella 185).

While it is tempting to read Petrarch's Griselda tale as a spiritualizing spin on the Boccaccian *novella*, Amy Goodwin reminds us that it is more of an affectionate imitation than a moralization.<sup>47</sup>

The spiritualizations of Petrarch's works by other authors are much more numerous than the spiritualizations of the *Decameron*; however, not all of these works were rewritings of his texts. Many of the *rifacimenti* of the works of Petrarch (including the *Canzoniere* and the *Trionfi*) were original, spiritual adaptations loosely based on these works, or poetry or theatrical works inspired by his style, or expositions concerning the spirituality already present in his works. This is not an exhaustive list of names and titles, but it includes:

1. Girolamo Casio de' Medici, *Vita, et morte di Giesu Christo ... ad imitatione di una canzone del Petrarca che comincia. Che debbio far, che mi consigli, o, amore* (~1525–1530);
2. Valerio da Bologna, *Prologo della amarissima e lagrimevole passione del nostro redentore Gesu Cristo ad imitazione del primo capitolo del Triompho d'Amore di Francesco Petrarca servando le medesime rime* (1529);
3. Gian Giacomo Salvatorino, *Tesoro di Sacra Scrittura sopra rime del Petrarca* (1540);
4. Panfilo Ganimede, *Pianto al Crocefisso dai versi del Petrarca di Ganimede Pamphilo da Sanseuerino* (~1543);
5. Feliciano Umbruno da Civitella, *Dialogo del dolce morire di Giesu Christo sopra le sei visioni di m. Francesco Petrarca* (1544);

---

<sup>47</sup> See Goodwin, "The Griselda Game."



6. Gabriele Fiamma, *Rime spirituali del r.d. Gabriel Fiamma, canonico regolare lateranense esposte da lui medesimo* (1570);
7. Pietro Vincenzo Sagliano, *Espositione spirituale dell'eccellente poeta m. Pietro Vincenzo Sagliano della citta d'Aversa sopra il Petrarca* (1591);
8. Pietro Giambelletti, *Canzone con due sonetti nell'ingresso d'un suo fratello nella religione de' cappuccini, ad imitazione di quella del Petrarca* (1600);
9. Anonymous, *Il primo Trionfo di m. Francesco Petrarca trasmutato nella passione del saluator nostro Iesu Christo, con vn sonetto della Madonna* (XVI secolo).<sup>48</sup>

The first and foremost motivation for moralizing Petrarch's works was to remove all instances of *'innamoramenti'* that did not have to do with God or the Madonna. Perhaps the most well-known of these Petrarchan *rifacimenti spirituali* was Girolamo Malipiero's *Petrarcha spirituale*, published in Venice in 1587. The *Petrarcha spirituale* was first written around 1536 and was reproduced in eight volumes until the 1580s. The title page of the first edition (1536) features a woodcut portrait of Petrarch and, according to the 1964 *Harvard Catalog of Books and Manuscripts*, on its verso another woodcut depicts the author (Malipiero, also written as "Maripetro") "speaking to Petrarch at the edge of a forest with Arquà and the poet's tomb in the distance." The catalogue entry elaborates on this scene, stating that "on leaves A2r-B4r is an imaginary dialogue between Malipiero and Petrarca—the meeting of June 8, 1534 (leaf A3v), pictured in the

---

<sup>48</sup> See Luzzi, "Censura e rinnovamento cattolico nell'età della Controriforma" 12, and Quondam, "Note sulla tradizione della poesia spirituale e religiosa" 169.

facing woodcut—in which the poet asks the Franciscan Malipiero to adapt his work to spiritual uses.”<sup>49</sup>

The thirteen-page dialogue that occurs between Malipiero and the ghost of Petrarch begins with the former asking the latter why he is in Arquà and what he is doing there. Petrarch responds that he has been sent there by “divine justice” until his collection of amorous poems has been “ritrattata” (“re-treated”). What follows is very similar to the dialogues in Petrarch’s *Secretum* that the character Franciscus (meant to be understood as the poet himself) has with Augustinus (meant to be Saint Augustine), wherein Franciscus expounds upon the troubles that earthly love has brought to his life and examines how he can redirect it towards more appropriate destinations (i.e. God and the Virgin Mary).

MARIP: And what are you doing here in this retreat? PET. I have been sent here by divine justice until my work can be purged of my amorous sonnets and songs. MARIP. And why? Are not your many and elegant poems all good things? PET. I hoped, God willing, that they were good; otherwise I would not be in this exile already for so long. MARIP. I also understood (I say this because, in my opinion, it is common in your vulgar writings) that in the figure of that woman Laura, you wanted to represent Wisdom: of whose beauty man, so desiring virtue, made himself a worthy lover: and consequently, that all of the verses and songs of love are allegorical, and have spiritual meanings. PET. With what evidence of the truth could one say this (and I confess it in the first of all of my sonnets): that amorous affections, in all the many poems I have written, came to me by means of youthful error? and that from my blind wanderings no other fruit could I have brought back, if not manifest shame, painful remorse, and finally clear experience; that how pleasing to the world is a brief dream?<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> *Harvard College Library Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts 272* (“Malipiero, Girolamo, d.ca.1547. *Il Petrarca spirituale*. 4°. Venice, Francesco Marcolini, November 1536”).

<sup>50</sup> “MARIP. Et che fai tu hora in questo heremo? PET. Son qui relegato dalla divina giustitia infino attanto, che sia ritrattata l’opera de gli amorosi miei sonetti & canzoni. MARIP. Et perche? Non sono le tante & si leggiadre tue rime cose tutte buone? PET. Volesse Iddio, che buone fussero; che non sarei in questo bando gia tanto te[m]po. MARIP. Ho pur inteso io ([questo] dico p[er] cio che appo me è poca pratica delle cose tue volgari) che sotto velame di non so che madonna Laura, volesti figurare la Sapientia:

After much discourse, most of it spiritual and self-deprecating in nature, some of it interspersed with lines of poetry, Malipiero and Petrarch come to the agreement that the former will take it upon himself to “correct” the latter’s work and help him to render it more spiritual. Malipiero says to Petrarch: “You have spoken so well, o wise Poet: and I will do, with divine help, that with which you task me. And if, going forward, you have more to say: so that my companions do not await me with harassment; with good license I take my leave of you: be in peace, and may our glorious Lord God be with you.”<sup>51</sup> Petrarch wishes Malipiero the same benedictions and, presumably, his spirit can now rest in peace.

Malipiero’s first sonnet is strikingly similar to Petrarch’s, with a few subtle changes, indicating more errors on Petrarch’s part and more culpability for his vanity:

Voi, ch’ascoltate in rime sparse il suono  
 De miei novi sospir; ch’escon dal core  
 Per la memoria di quel cieco errore;  
 Che mi fe in parte altr’huom da quel, ch’i sono;  
 Poi che dal vario stil piu non ragiono,  
 Ma piango il fallo mio pien di dolore,  
 Il van desir, e’l fuggitivo amore,

---

delle cui bellezze l’huomo, al quale massimame[n]te la virtu aggrada: fassi degno amatore: et per conseguente, che tutti i versi & canti tuoi d’amore, sono allegorici, & hanno sensi spirituali. PET. Con che evidenza di verita si puo questo dire, confessando io nel primo de tutti i miei sonetti: che gli amorosi affetti, de quai tante rime io scrissi, mi vennero per giovanile errore? et che da quel mio cieco vaneggiare altro frutto non havea riportato, senon manifesta vergogna, doglioso pentimento, & alla fine chiara isperienza; che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno?” (Malipiero 2a). The end of this quote references the first sonnet of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*.

<sup>51</sup> “Ottimamente hai parlato, Poeta saggio: & io farò con l’aiuto divino, quanto m’imponi. Et se avanti piu a dire non ti resta: accio che i miei compagni con molestia non m’aspettino; con buona licenza torrò da te commiato: rimanti in pace, & sia teco il Signore Dio nostro glorioso” (Malipiero 8).

Pieta, prego vi mova a mio perdono.  
 Conosco ben, sì come al popol tutto  
 Materia fui d'error: onde sovente  
 Di me medesimo meco mi vergogno.  
 Hora, drizzato al ciel, spero far frutto  
 Di vero ben; ch'io veggio chiaramente,  
 Che quanto piace al Mondo è breve sogno.<sup>52</sup>

The components that follow (317 sonnets, and 48 *canzoni* and other *rime*) are interrupted by a 17-page-long “ammonitione” (warning or advice) to the reader (also called “ripertorio” in the book’s index) on how to approach and interpret the *canzoni*.<sup>53</sup> The section of *canzoni* is introduced as “Canzoni Predette di Messer Francesco Petrarca Divenuto Theologo et Spirituale” (98), ending with a particularly long *canzone* dedicated to the Virgin Mary (as is Petrarch’s), with only a few letters changed from the original words. For the most part, the components of Malipiero’s “songbook” employ basically the same rhyme schemes and metrics as those featured in Petrarch’s; the differences are subtle, such as changing the figure of Laura into Jesus Christ, God or the Virgin Mary, and the deity Amor into God (Dio).<sup>54</sup> Finally, at the end of the alphabetically-organized

---

<sup>52</sup> Compare this syntax to Petrarch’s *R/F I*: “Voi ch’ascoltate in rime sparse il suono / di quei sospiri ond’io nudriva ‘l core / in sul mio primo giovenile errore / quand’era in parte altr’uom da quel ch’i’ sono, // del vario stile in ch’io piango et ragiono / fra le vane speranze e ‘l van dolore, / ove sia chi per prova intenda amore, / spero trovar pietà, nonché perdono. // Ma ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto / favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente / di me mesdesmo meco mi vergogno; / et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è ‘l frutto, / e ‘l pentersi, e ‘l conoscer chiaramente / che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.”

<sup>53</sup> This section is dense with references to Medieval Italian writers (e.g. Dante; Boccaccio is not mentioned), saints, biblical figures, and ancient Greek writers and philosophers.

<sup>54</sup> “Cupido si trasforma in Padre Eterno e in Gesù, Stefano Colonna similmente in Gesù, Laura in Maria, in Dio Padre, in Gesù, in morte, in anima, nella carne che dà noja al poeta e non so in che altro” [“Cupid transforms into God and Jesus, Stefano Colonna similarly into Jesus, Laura into Mary, into God

index, there is a small, imagined conversation in the form of a sonnet, which occurs between Petrarch and an unnamed critic, entitled “Collocutori Critico et Petrarcha”:

Cri. Petrarcha; ond'è, che vai sì altero & molto  
Allegro in faccia piu, che per adietro?  
Pet. Non sai, che'l cor human, fia chiaro, o tetro,  
Sua qualita fuor pinge a l'huom nel volto?  
Cri. Conosco cio: ma dimmi, ond'hai raccolto  
Spirto di sì gioconde rime, & metro?  
Pet. Mercè del dotto & saggio Maripetro;  
Che d'amor vano, & grave error m'ha sciolto.  
Cri. Dunque la tua soave & dolce lyra  
Piu Laura non risona? Pet. non gia certo.  
Cri. Che poi? Pet. il sommo ben; che mi da vita.  
Cri. Felice tu; che impresa si delira  
Lasciati: & hai a Christo il canto offerto:  
Onde fia eterna tua Musa gradita.<sup>55</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that, like many similar spiritualization works, the *Petrarcha Spirituale* was not received well by critics—neither immediately, nor later.

The loudest of these critical voices is Arturo Graf, who illustrates in his book *Attraverso*

---

the Father, in Jesus, in death, in soul, in the flesh that so bothered the poet and I don't know in what else”] (Graf 83).

<sup>55</sup> “Cri. Petrarch, why is it that you walk around so haughtily & so happy, more than ever before? Pet. Don't you know that the human heart, be it light or dark, paints its qualities on the human face? Cri. I know this: but tell me, Spirit, from where have you gathered such jocund rhymes and meter? Pet. Thanks to the learned and wise Malipiero; who has freed me from vain love and grave error. Cri. Thus your sweet lyre will no longer sing of Laura? Pet. Certainly not. Cri. Then [of] what? Pet. [of] the greatest good, which gives me life. Cri. Lucky you, who has left such a delirious enterprise: and has offered your song to Christ: whence your Muse will be eternally welcomed” (Malipiero 161).

*il Cinquecento* (1888) how much damage the spiritualization and rewriting efforts did to the *Canzoniere*, especially those of Malipiero. He describes Malipiero, perhaps sarcastically, as a “pitiful soul” (“un’anima pietosa”) who wanted to place the *Canzoniere* under a sort of protection when it was condemned and banned in Rome in 1547. This ‘protective’ measure was not nearly as helpful as the author wished and also faced heavy criticism from those involved in the Council of Trent.<sup>56</sup> Graf notes that the *Canzoniere* was not totally harmless, seeing that many of its readers left the virtuous path after being seduced by its songs; thus, purging it from its ‘toxins’ did make it easier to read.<sup>57</sup> Cecilia Luzzi sees Malipiero’s undertaking of the *Petrarcha spirituale* as part of a “project of a militant Church” of Franciscans (given that Malipiero was a Minorite), and notes that the spiritualization movement was, overall, a sort of “delirium of cancellation and removal.”<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately (and likely embarrassingly) for Malipiero, even his own

---

<sup>56</sup> “Nel 1547, morto appena il Bembo, si cercò d’impedire in ogni modo che si facesse in Roma una ristampa del suo *Canzoniere*, e anzi si tentò di far condannare il libro, tentativo ripetuto poi nel 1585. Un’anima pietosa lo tolse sotto la sua protezione e lo spiritualizzò. Ma anche gli spiritualizzamenti non erano senza pericolo: il *Dialogo* già ricordato di Feliciano Umbruno fu proibito dal Concilio di Trento” [“In 1547, just after the death of Bembo, every effort was made to impede the reprinting of his *Canzoniere* in Rome, and they even tried to make the book condemned, an attempt repeated in 1585. A pitiful soul took it under his wing and spiritualized it. But even the spiritualizations were not harmless: the *Dialogue* already written by Feliciano Umbruno was prohibited by the Council of Trent”] (Graf 85).

<sup>57</sup> “Il *Canzoniere* del Petrarca non è senza molto pericolo, ed egli prese a rifarlo, vedendo tanti giovani, *domentre* cedono alle lusinghe degli *illecebrosi canti*, lasciata la via della virtù, *nell’abisso di perpetua morte strabocchevolmente precipitarsi*. Per ciò ha *con opportuni e convenevoli antidoti espurgati da ogni veleno antico i leggiadri sonetti del Tosco poeta*, sì che *niente più* potranno loro essere *nojosi*” (Graf 82; italics in original).

<sup>58</sup> “L’estetica del Malipiero si pone esattamente agli antipodi dell’estetica oratoriana: se quest’ultima mira alla devozione orientandosi verso scelte stilistiche facilmente fruibili ‘per catturare il cuore e l’intelligenza anche dei semplici’, la prima risponde alla necessità di censurare nella poesia tutto ciò che rinvia all’esistenza terrena, in una sorta di ‘delirio di cancellazione, di rimozione’, rimuovendone anche la valenza ascetica ed edificante” [“The aesthetic of Malipiero places itself exactly at the antipodes of oratory aesthetics: if this latter one considers devotion, orienting itself toward easily usable stylistic choices ‘to capture the heart and intelligence even of simpletons’, the former responds to the necessity of censoring in poetry all that returns to earthly existence, in a sort of ‘delirium of cancellation, of removal’, removing from it also the aesthetic and edifying value”] (Luzzi 22).

spiritualization was deemed “unsuitable for Christian ears” by some members of the Congregation of the Index in the 1570s (Rozzo, “Italian Literature on the Index” 211).

Aside from Malipiero, other Petrarchan *rifacimenti* (either of his poetry or of his general style) appeared throughout Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Feliciano Umbruno da Civitella penned the *Dialogo del dolce morire di Gesù Christo sopra le sei Visioni di M. Francesco Petrarca* (1544); Gian Giacomo Salvatorino, the *Thesoro de Sacra Scrittura sopra rime del Petrarca* (1547); and Pietro Vincenzo Sagliano, *Esposizione spirituale sopra il Petrarca* (1590). Much like Lionardo Salviati, Salvatorino was said to be an “assassin” of the Petrarchan works that he spiritualized.<sup>59</sup> Amedeo Quondam and Virginia Cox have catalogued the majority of writers and titles pertaining to this subset of Italian literature, in which the “modello petrarchesco” is taken and used as the framework for spiritual poetry or writing.<sup>60</sup>

### III.3 Ariosto

---

<sup>59</sup> “I sonetti del Petrarca ci sono rifatti quando una, quando due, quando tre volte, e sono uno, due, tre assassinamenti” [“Petrarch’s sonnets are redone once, twice, thrice, and are one, two, three assassinations”] (Graf 81).

<sup>60</sup> For more on this subject see: Quondam, “Note sulla tradizione”; Idem, “Riscrittura, citazione e parodia. Il ‘Petrarca spirituale’ di Girolamo Malipiero”; and Cox, *The Prodigious Muse*. Quondam emphasizes the ease with which Petrarch’s poetry was able to be respawned and refigured: “Non foss’altro perché nella memoria della poesia del Cinquecento l’architetto di Petrarca funziona come fattore genetico di gran parte (se non di tutte) le esperienze comunicative del conflitto interiore: il poeta, in quanto soggetto dell’enunciazione ma anche dell’enunciato (colui che scrive/dice *io*: è la poesia lirica a fondare la consapevolezza del soggetto che parla di sé), è non solo, e non soltanto, innamorato, ma è soprattutto dolente e in lagrime. In tutti i casi—ed è questo il fattore fondamentale—il lessico resta invariato: innamorato o peccatore che sia, il poeta piange e versa lagrime ... e spesso, consapevole delle sue colpe e dei suoi peccati, racconta la storia della sua conversione” [“If only because in the memory of the poetry of the Cinquecento the macrotext of Petrarch works as a genetic factor for the most part (if not of all) of the communicative experiences of interior conflict: the poet, as much subject of enunciation but also of the enunciated (he who writes/says *I*: it is lyric poetry that founds the awareness of the subject who speaks of himself); he is not only in love, but is above all in pain and in tears. In all cases—and this is the fundamental factor—the lexicon remains unvaried: enamored or sinner though he may be, the poet weeps and pours tears ... and often, aware of his faults and of his sins, he recounts the story of his conversion”] (“Note sulla tradizione” 192-93).

Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was first published in 1516. In the following century and a half, numerous editions cropped up that purported to edit, expunge, or spiritualize the text, following the same objectives as Dionigi and Malipiero for Boccaccio's and Petrarch's texts. Here are just a few examples of titles pertaining to the spiritualization of the *Orlando Furioso*:

1. Laura Terracina, *Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti d'Orlando furioso* (1549);
2. Goro da Collalto (also written as Colcelalto), *Primo canto del Furioso, traslatato in spirituale* (1589);
3. Cristoforo Scanello (also called Cieco da Forlì), *Primo canto dell'Ariosto tradotto in rime spirituali* (1593);
4. Vincenzo Marino, *Il Furioso spirituale* (1596);
5. Giulio Cornelio Graziano, *Di Orlando santo vita, & morte* (1597);
6. Ortensio Scammacca, *L'Orlando Furioso spirituale* (Palermo, 1644).<sup>61</sup>

Censors in the Cinquecento were reluctant to place the *Orlando Furioso* on the Index of Banned Books, and debates arose among them as to how dangerous Ariosto's work actually was. For example, the general commissioner of the Roman Sant'Uffizio, Michele Ghislieri, wrote to the Inquisitor of Genoa in 1557 and expressed his opinion that it was "ridiculous" to include the *Furioso* and other similar works due to their fable-like nature.<sup>62</sup> Regardless, the *Furioso* did end up on a Portuguese Index toward the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Puglisi, "Fra passione umana e divina" 292; see bibliography for full titles.

<sup>62</sup> See quote in Introduction (pp. 8-9, n16) by Paschini.

<sup>63</sup> "La letteratura al bando" (Biblioteca Panizzi).



Vincenzo Marino (number 4 in the list above) decided to undertake a spiritualization of the *Furioso* in 1596. Carmen Puglisi's article on Marino's *Furioso Spirituale* provides a brief but acute textual analysis of the work.<sup>64</sup> She notes that Marino compared the original work to Polyphemus—the cyclops who devoured Odysseus' sailors—and Ariosto's readers to the sailors who met that gruesome fate.<sup>65</sup> In other words, there are very few readers of texts like the *Furioso* who could go up against it and not be corrupted by its “finte beltà” (“false beauties”) and, likewise, who would not go on to emulate the sins and errors they have seen committed in the text. This argument takes Boccaccio's words at the Conclusion of the *Decameron* (“niuna corrotta mente intese mai sanamente parola,” or “no corrupt mind ever understood a word wholesomely”) and twists them slightly; now, instead of the reader being at fault for his or her corrupt interpretation of a text, it is the text that is fundamentally responsible for corrupting the reader. This is analogous to the arguments being made at this time as to whether a book was sufficiently dangerous (that is, able to corrupt the minds of its readers and compel them to sin) to place it on the Index of Banned Books.

The changes that Marino made to the *Furioso* to render it ‘spiritual’ are numerous. Marino frequently uses Saint Francis as the exemplar *par excellence* of faith and holiness, and the theme of Franciscan spirituality pervades the text.<sup>66</sup> Otherwise, akin

---

<sup>64</sup> See Puglisi, “Fra passione umana e divina: il *Furioso* spiritualizzato di Vincenzo Marino.”

<sup>65</sup> “Così che pochi sono i lettori che leggendo un libro così giganteo tale, che da lui devorati, no [*sic*] muoiono; voglio dir, che invaghiti dalle finte beltà, non faccian mille peccati e mille errori” (Marino, qtd. in Puglisi 287).

<sup>66</sup> “Disseminati in tutta l’opera [di Marino] troviamo espliciti riferimenti alla spiritualità francescana. L’autore polemizza contro la ricchezza del clero del tempo celebrando S. Francesco come ‘exemplum.’ Continui sono i richiami alla povertà e all’austerità dei costumi: nel sesto canto, richiamando la figura di Benedetto XII, papa del periodo avignonese, che predicò contro gli abusi della corte ecclesiastica, Vincenzo Marino si scaglia contro il nepotismo” [“Spread throughout Marino’s work we find explicit references to Franciscan spirituality. The author argues against the riches of the clergy of the time,

to the *Decamerone Spirituale*, there is a notable lack of narrative, which is substituted by homiletic writing.<sup>67</sup> Whereas Marino imitates the objectives of Malipiero—in guiding his readers away from earthly love and toward spiritual adoration, providing saintly and spiritual figures as exempla, and ridding the text of obscene material—other spiritualizing authors, such as Giovan Batista Filauro Aquilano, emend the Ariostan text by changing the “furioso” part of the title character entirely and replacing his madness with wisdom.<sup>68</sup>

### III.4 Tasso

Torquato Tasso is the only author featured in this chapter to spiritualize his own work. Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*, which he began writing at age fifteen, was published in 1581 without his permission by Celio Malespini; understandably, Tasso was upset with this action, given that he had not finished the work, nor did he want it to be published at all. Regardless, Tasso gave the work to five Roman revisors for them to critique—he wished to have his work scrutinized in the Aristotelian method—and critique it they did. The five *revisori romani* were Sperone Speroni, Scipione Gonzaga, Silvio Antoniano, Pier Angelo Bargeo and Flaminio de’ Nobili. Antoniano would prove to be the most

---

celebrating St. Francis as exemplum. Continuous are the references to poverty and to the austerity of social habits: in the sixth canto, recalling the figure of Benedict XII, pope of the Avignon period who preached against the abuses of the ecclesiastical court, Vincenzo Marino hurls abuses at nepotism”] (Puglisi 295).

<sup>67</sup> “La trama è quasi inesistente, la narrazione diventa un pretesto, paradigma universale e veicolo di educazione” (Puglisi 298).

<sup>68</sup> “Vi fu finalmente chi, mal sofferendo, che Orlando fosse dall’Ariosto notato di pazzia, imprese a dimostrarlo saggio; e questi fu Giovan Batista Filauro Aquilano, il quale compose un Poema di quindici Canti sopra la saviezza d’Orlando, e per contrapporlo a quello dell’Ariosto, intitolato *Orlando Saggio*” [“There was finally he who, suffering badly, where Ariosto made Orlando crazy, took it upon himself to show that [Orlando] was instead wise; and this man was Giovan Batista Filauro Aquilano, who composed a Poem of fifteen cantos regarding the wisdom of Orlando, entitled *Orlando saggio*”] (Crescimbeni 340).

influential in pushing Tasso to make a rewriting of the *Liberata*, which Tasso retitled *Gerusalemme conquistata*.<sup>69</sup>

The *Gerusalemme conquistata*, published in 1593, differs from the *Gerusalemme liberata* in both small and large ways. It is much longer than the *Liberata* (24 *libri* instead of 20 *canti*); a few names of main characters are changed (e.g. Erminia becomes Nicea, Rinaldo becomes Riccardo, etc.); some episodes are added and some deleted entirely (gone is the story of Olindo and Sofronia, as well as any amorous scenes); and many of the relationships between certain characters are different. On a larger scale, Tasso places more emphasis on the religious and theological aspects of his story—for instance, wherever demons or angels appear in the text, Tasso provides in-depth theological explanations for their presence—and the structure of the whole story is more unified. In conformity with the strict religious scruples laid out by the five Roman revisors, the *Conquistata* is a text that fits better into the Counter-Reformation literary mold than the *Liberata*; however, some have found the newer text to be poorer than the original, and harder to read due to its monotony and rigidity.<sup>70</sup> In the same year that he published the *Conquistata*, Tasso also wrote a treatise entitled *Giudicio sovra la sua Gerusalemme da lui stesso riformata*.<sup>71</sup> The work served as an ‘apologia’ of, or justification for, the writing of the *Conquistata*, wherein Tasso sought to prove that, thanks to his revisions, the newer work was both stylistically richer and more orthodox than the *Liberata* and

---

<sup>69</sup> See Angelo Solerti, *Vita di Torquato Tasso*, and Jo Ann Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure*.

<sup>70</sup> See, for instance, Georges Güntert, “Dalla ‘Gerusalemme liberata’ alla ‘Conquistata’: Racconto di nobili imprese e allegoria del ‘contemptus mundi.’”

<sup>71</sup> This work was not published until 1666. Tasso also wrote an *Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata* in 1584; Lionardo Salviati, the aforementioned “assassino di Boccaccio”, wrote a response two months later, entitled *Risposta all’Apologia di Torquato Tasso*.

more worthy of praise. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, the *Conquistata* is lesser known and studied today than the *Liberata*.

Silvio Antoniano, a priest and member of the five *revisori romani*, not only co-revised the *Liberata* but also demanded that Tasso change it extensively, mostly by removing the romantic passages, in order to make the work suitable for consumption by nuns and priests.<sup>72</sup> In response, Tasso made a few minor modifications and tried to keep the majority of the romantic scenes, claiming that they were necessary for maintaining the poem's integrity.<sup>73</sup> Tasso's insistence on "assert[ing] his right to individual expression of freedom" (Cavallo 221) while acknowledging that the Inquisitors' approval was necessary for his poem's publication led to "a painful battle lasting two years between poetry on the one hand and pedantry and religious scruples on the other."<sup>74</sup> Despite the unfortunate outcome of these 'battles'—Tasso was eventually imprisoned in a mental asylum in Ferrara—the struggle between Antoniano and Tasso opened up new discussions and even, as Jo Ann Cavallo suggests, "a new conception of the individual's relation to the state."<sup>75</sup> The result of the demand for a newer, cleaner version of the text was the *Gerusalemme conquistata*.

---

<sup>72</sup> See Solerti, *Vita di Torquato Tasso* I: 213-14, qtd. in Cavallo 221.

<sup>73</sup> *Lettere*, 1: 144, qtd. in Cavallo 221. Tasso also wrote an *Allegoria della Gerusalemme Liberata* in 1576, hoping to free himself from accusations of immorality; however, according to Salvatore Guglielmino and Hermann Grosser, "non bastava: gli scrupoli di carattere religioso assunsero la forma di vere e proprie manie di persecuzione. Per mettere alla prova la propria ortodossia nella fede cristiana si sottopose spontaneamente al giudizio dell'Inquisizione di Ferrara, ricevendo nel 1575 e nel 1577 due sentenze di assoluzione" ["this was not enough: the scruples of the religious character assumed the form of true and real manias of persecution. In order to prove the proper orthodoxy of the Christian faith he spontaneously placed himself under the judgment of the Inquisition of Ferrara, receiving in 1575 and 1577 two sentences of absolution"] (Guglielmino and Grosser, *Il sistema letterario* 2A: 367).

<sup>74</sup> Solerti, *Vita di Torquato Tasso* I: 206, qtd. in Cavallo 221.

<sup>75</sup> Cavallo 233. Cavallo gives much more credit to Tasso's autonomy and genius than previous critics: "Previous readers who have noted ambiguities and contradictions in Tasso's poem have attributed them to a struggle within the poet himself between compliance and resistance to the hegemonic forces of

This ‘purified’ edition did not satisfy everyone, however: in 1618 Agostino Gallucci, a Franciscan friar, published the *San Francesco, overo Gierusalemme Celeste acquistata*, a poem with 25 *canti*. In his dedicatory letter to his “benigni lettori,” Gallucci tells his readers of his plan to edify them spiritually and lead them down the path to sainthood in the imitation of Saint Francis. He begins the eight-page letter with these words:

The Acquisition of the Celestial Jerusalem is as necessary to mortals as their health, and those who do not study it, or who walk away from it, show that they care little for the end of their voyage, and much less for their country: therefore it is, that the Lord God, as diligent Protector of all His Creatures, but particularly of Man, after having given them the example of how to live, and with death having facilitated the road toward death; he has also given countless mirrors into his mercy, in which, beautifying oneself, one can adorn oneself with those gifts and prerogatives that aim to beatify him.<sup>76</sup>

Gallucci spends a few paragraphs commenting on orthography, style and semantics, and a few more insisting on the importance of learning the lives of the saints; however, like Dionigi, he makes no mention of Tasso.<sup>77</sup> This letter is followed by two others, one

---

Church and State. I would like to suggest instead that Tasso was not trying to exorcise the demonic, but rather to legitimize the human, and that he was not a victim of internal confusion, but a master of dissimulation. Ariosto had already used the technique with remarkable lucidity and control as he subjected his lengthy encomiastic passages on his Estense patrons (and other powerful figures) to ironic reversals of meaning. Tasso, living and writing in an environment that limited freedom of expression with respect not only to historical personages but also to the subject matter and treatment, transfers the technique of dissimulation to the *favola* of his poem” (225).

<sup>76</sup> “L’Acquisto della Celeste Gierusalemme è tanto neccessaria à mortali, quanto gli è neccessaria la salute, e quelli, che non se ne fanno scopo, ò che gli caminano lontano, mostrano di curar poco il fine del lor viaggio, e molto meno la Patria: quindi è, che ‘l Signore Iddio, come Protettore diligentissimo di tutte le sue Creature, mà particolarmente dell’ Huomo, dopo havergli con la propria vita dato l’ esempio del vivere, e con la morte facilitata la strada del morire; halli altresì con successiva misericordia apparecchiati continui specchi, ne’ quali abbellendo se stesso, possa adornarsi di quelle doti, e prerogative, che vagliano à beatificarlo” (Gallucci 6).

<sup>77</sup> Gallucci explains a bit later that he diverges from the traditional epic style: “Le Regole di Aristotele obligano le composizioni Epiche ad Azzione singolare, & esse dicono, che l’ Invenzione sia l’ Anima del Poema: ma io senza Invenzione mi son dilatato in campo così spazioso di Fatti diversi,

written by two priests from Milan and Sicily (Cornelio da Lodi and Felice di Piazza), who confirm that they have read Gallucci's work and approve it for publication on the basis of its religiosity and absence of anything "repugnant to the Catholic Profession."<sup>78</sup>

Gallucci's verses are as similar to Tasso's as Malipiero's are to Petrarch's: that is, only a few select words are changed within the verses to render the poetry more spiritual. The final effect is neither a different nor improved work—it is merely, as nineteenth-century author Henry Hart Milman calls it, "a kind of religious plagiarism."<sup>79</sup> If we consider the first *ottavo* of each work side-by-side, this claim of plagiarism is justified. Tasso's first *ottavo* reads:

Canto l'armi pietose, e 'l Capitano,  
Che 'l gran Sepolcro liberò di Cristo:

---

Spirituali, Contemplativi, e Morali, che se la Pietà Christiana non modera il rigore di quelle; ò s' ella al meno non fà conoscere, che la vita di Francesco incaminata all' Acquisto del Paradiso, è stata un sola Azzione, e che le altre tutte le hanno servito per Episodij neccessarij alla perfezzione della sua gloriosa Impresa, gli Aristotelici non haveranno di che compiacersi" ["The Rules of Aristotle obligate epic compositions and singular actions, and they say that Invention is the Soul of the Poem; but I, without Invention, have busied myself in the spacious field of diverse Spiritual, Contemplative, and Moral Facts, so that if Christian Piety does not moderate the rigor of them, or if it at least does not make it known, that the life of Saint Francis heading toward the Acquisition of Paradise was one sole Action, and that all others have served as Episodes necessary to the perfection of his glorious endeavour, the Aristotelians will not have anything with which to enjoy themselves"] (Gallucci 7).

<sup>78</sup> "Noi infrascritti F. Cornelio da Lodi Lettore, e Predicatore della Riforma di Milano, Padre della Provincia di Baviera, e Guardiano ad Ingolstadio; e F. Felice di Piazza della Provincia di Valdenoto in Sicilia Lettore, e Guardiano à Lanzotto, altresì nella Baviera ... havendo veduto il Poema del M. R. P. F. Agostino Gallucci da Mondolfo ... & havendolo attentamente letto, e considerato ... in virtù della presente facciamo fede à chiunque s'aspetta, che non habbiamo trovato in esso cosa alcuna repugnante alla Cattolica Professione, e fede, nè à buoni costumi, nè alle ordinazioni de' Prencipi; anzi più tosto, che l' habbiamo riconosciuto pieno d'una sana, e santa dottrina, sufficiente ad ammaestrare chiunque desidera perfezzionarsi, e camminare per la strada di Dio ..." ["We the underwritten ... having seen the Poem of Gallucci, ... and having read and considered it attentively ... in virtue of the present text we give faith to whomever reads it, that we have not found in this thing anything repugnant toward the Catholic Profession and faith, nor toward bad habits, nor to the order of Principles; moreover, that we have recognized it to be full of a healthy and holy doctrine, sufficient to teach anyone who desires to perfect oneself and walk the way of God..."] (Gallucci, n.p.).

<sup>79</sup> Milman, *History of Latin Christianity: Including that of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicolas V*, 2: 254n1.

Molto egli oprò col senno e con la mano;  
Molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto.  
E invan l'Inferno a lui s'oppose; e invano  
S'armò d'Asia e di Libia il popol misto;  
Che il Ciel gli diè favore, e sotto ai santi  
Segni ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.

Gallucci's first *ottavo*, almost identical to Tasso's but with minor changes and jumbled lines, reads:

Canto l'arme mendiche, e'l Capitano,  
Che 'l gran STENDARDO rinnovò di Christo.  
E in van l'inferno se gli oppose, e 'n vano  
S'armò de suo i contrari il popol misto.  
Molto sostenne in questo mondo insano.  
Molto soffrì nel salutare acquisto.  
Vinse i nemici, e sotto i Segni santi  
Vari raccolse, & infiniti erranti.<sup>80</sup>

From there, the differences vary more obviously. Gallucci's first *canto* features almost no autonomous characters, save for those of Christ, Saint Francis and a few angels, and at times historical or biblical figures such as Adam are used in the same way female characters are used in the *Decamerone Spirituale* (as exempla). Each *canto* is followed by an "Argomento Morale, et Allegorico" of the *canto*, spanning 3 to 5 pages, and the author provides a list of Biblical passages and places after the final *canto*. The extensive index

---

<sup>80</sup> Gallucci, n.p.; capitalization in original.

of names at the end of the 907-page epic reveals almost none of the same figures that appear in Dionigi's work, and only 10 women or female figures.<sup>81</sup>

Two other spiritualized versions of Tasso's work, albeit not of the *Gerusalemme liberata*, are Gioan Battista di Lione's 1691 *Aminta moralizzato* and Crisippo Selva's 1611 selection of Tasso's *Rime* "fatte spirituali."<sup>82</sup> Pierantonio Serassi writes of Selva:

Here I will not fail to add, that the amorous Poems of Tasso were made spiritual by Cavaliere Crisippo Selva, Gentleman from Parma; who, being amused in his most florid years by writing rhyming arguments, to which he felt more transported by a youthful sense, at a more mature age he dedicated himself entirely to working in sacred or moral subjects: and after having rendered spiritual (with much approval) the *Rime del Bembo*, he turned toward doing the same to those of Tasso, choosing the amorous ones for the project, since those had affects which were apter and easier to make spiritual.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> These women are: Saint Agnes, Saint Clare (and the nuns of her Order), Claudia Medici à Pesaro, "Donzelle, che si mostrano à Francesco presso Siena," "Giacoma Settesoli devotissima del Santo," Madonna di Loreto, "Madonna de gli Angeli consecrata da sette Vescovi," "Meretrice tentatrice di Francesco," "Sibilla, si descrivono alcune Figure di essa, nella concavità del Silenzio, mà vere per il successo," and Vittoria della Rovere Granduchessa di Toscana (Gallucci, n.p.).

<sup>82</sup> See bibliography for full titles. There is not much commentary available for the *Aminta moralizzato*; an eighteenth-century author named Pieroantonio Serassi, not finding sufficient explanation from Crescimbeni, who calls the work "mediocre," offers the following criticism: "Io, che lo tengo tra' i miei libri, ho potuto recarne il titolo intero, e posso altresì affermare, che il componimento è assai mediocre, e che l'Autore non merita altra lode, che della buona intenzione, che ebbe di rendere spirituale ed edificante una composizione profana" ["Having this among my books, I was able to provide the entire title, and can otherwise confirm that the component is quite mediocre, and that the Author does not merit any praise other than for a good intention, that he rendered a profane composition spiritual and edifying"] (Serassi 583). Alessandro Piumati (1891) also calls the work a "componimento mediocre" (Piumati 117).

<sup>83</sup> "E qui non lascerò di aggiugnere, che le Poesie amorose del Tasso furono ridotte spirituali dal Cav. Crisippo Selva, Gentiluomo Parmigiano; il quale essendosi diletato ne' suoi più floridi anni di poetare sopra argomenti, a' quali più si sentiva trasportato dal senso giovanile, nell'età più matura s'era dato interamente ad esercitarsi in soggetti sacri o morali: e dopo d'aver con molto plauso rese spirituali le *Rime del Bembo*, si rivolse a fare il medesimo di quelle del Tasso, scegliendo a tal oggetto le amorose, siccome quelle, i di cui affetti erano più atti e facili a convertirsi in spirituali" (Serassi 590).



Not much is known about either Lione's or Selva's moralizing and spiritualizing works, but it is clear by the use of the words "ridotte" and "mediocre" in Serassi's criticism, for example, that critics did not think too highly of spiritualized versions of Tasso's texts.<sup>84</sup>

### III.5 Bembo, Castiglione, Boiardo, and Others

While other Italian authors did not receive as much attention as Boccaccio, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso regarding spiritualization of their works, they were also included among the rewriting and spiritualizing efforts of authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Crisippo Selva put the same treatment to Pietro Bembo's *Rime* at the end of the 1500s (*Scelta delle rime amorose di M. Pietro Bembo fatte spirituali*) as he did to Tasso. Gioan Battista di Lione, the same Franciscan monk who wrote the *Aminta moralizzato*, is also said to have written a moralization of Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, which he renamed *Pastor Divino*; however, the existence of this work is questionable.<sup>85</sup>

Pio Paschini once wrote: "Because of the importance assumed in sixteenth-century Italian literature by Baldassar Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, it was decided that the work must be expurgated so that it could be read without scruple."<sup>86</sup> In 1593, Antonio Ciccarelli published an edition of *Il Cortegiano* that claimed to be "riveduto, & corretto" on the title page. Ciccarelli's corrections went far beyond the usual grammatical errors that this claim entails: citing pressure from his 'Superiori,' he secularized the

---

<sup>84</sup> See Cox, *The Prodigious Muse*, for more on Selva.

<sup>85</sup> See Crescimbeni 386: "Lo stesso Poema fu tradotto in molte lingue ... e fu anche moralizzato da Fra Gio. Batista di Leone Minor Conventuale, e doveva stamparsi col titolo *Il Pastor Divino*, come si dice nella Lettera a' Lettori dell' *Aminta Moralizzato* del medesimo Leone; ma non sappiamo, se la stampa sia mai seguita" ["The same Poem was translated into many languages ... and it was also moralized by Fra Giovanni Batista di Leone, Minorite, and should have been printed with the title *Il Pastor Divino*, as is said in the Letter to the Readers of the *Aminta moralizzato* of the same Leone; but we do not know if the printing ever happened"].

<sup>86</sup> Paschini, "Letterati ed Indice" 261, qtd. in Rozzo, "Italian Literature on the Index" 217.

ecclesiastical characters and removed or corrected passages that were found to be immoral or which “besmirched the morality of the text.”<sup>87</sup> Since the Roman Indices of 1590 and 1593 cited Ciccarelli’s expurgated edition as the only one permissible for reading, these changes were important and shaped the reading of the *Cortegiano* at this time: according to Ugo Rozzo: “The truth is that there could not have been minor or major expurgations, given that the disfigurement of the original text was entirely deliberate and utterly disregarded the writer’s ideas and creative choices. And one may also contend that more or less visible changes were all the more ‘dangerous’ because they were covert” (218).

Francesco Berni, a satirical poet working in the beginning of the sixteenth century, took it upon himself to write a work entitled *L’Orlando moralizzato dal Berni*, which was a moralized version of Matteo Maria Boiardo’s *Orlando innamorato* (left unfinished in 1494). Like Ciccarelli’s edition of the *Cortegiano*, Berni had other motivations in correcting Boiardo’s work. Danilo Romei writes: “[Berni’s] is not a ‘grammatical’ re-writing, it is said. Berni intervenes in the text with great liberty. It is true that he alters the linguistic and expressive appearance in a radical way ... but what counts more is that he has no intention of altering the substance. He takes out (little) and adds, mutes to his taste, and even distorts, according to a logic that is anything but governed by caprice or by improvisation.”<sup>88</sup>

The first *ottavo* of Boiardo’s poem reads:

---

<sup>87</sup> Rozzo, “Italian Literature on the Index” 217.

<sup>88</sup> “Che cosa fa il Berni? La sua non è una riscrittura ‘grammaticale’, si è detto. Il Berni interviene sul testo con grande libertà. È vero che ne altera in modo radicale la veste linguistica ed espressiva, secondo modelli alternativi ... ma quello che più conta è che non ha nessuno scrupolo ad alterarne la sostanza. Toglie (poco) e aggiunge, muta a suo piacimento, stravolge persino, secondo una logica tutt’altro che governata dal capriccio o dall’improvvisazione” (Romei 185).

Fu gloriosa Bretagna la grande  
una stagion per l'arme e per l'amore,  
onde ancor oggi il nome suo si spande,  
sì che al re Artuse fa portare onore,  
quando e bon cavallieri a quelle bande  
mostrarno in più battaglie il suo valore,  
andando col lor dame in aventura;  
et or sua fama al nostro tempo dura.

Meanwhile, Berni's first *ottavo*, a completely different poem, mockingly responds:

O van Narciso, o miseri seguaci,  
Ch'all'amor di voi stessi tutti dati,  
Sete maligni, avari, iniqui, audaci,  
E pieni in somma di tutti i peccati;  
Che presi da' piacer vani e fallaci  
di questo mondo, che sono figurati  
in quelle donne, in sul prato morite;  
perché così della via dritta uscite?

Unlike Malipiero or Gallucci, who subtly change a word or two of Petrarch's and Tasso's verses without altering them radically, Berni decided to completely overhaul the *Innamorato* line by line, creating not so much a 'moralized' version, as he claims, but an

entirely new one that criticizes the morality and actions of Boiardo's characters by means of sermons and lectures.<sup>89</sup>

#### IV. The Spiritualizing Movement as European Cultural-Literary Phenomenon

##### IV.1 Spain

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Italian authors were not the only ones to transform works of literature into *spiritualizzazioni*: Spanish authors performed the same spiritualizations of literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both to Spanish and Italian literature (mostly Petrarch's *Canzoniere*).<sup>90</sup> The name that comes up most often in this realm of literary production is Garcilaso de la Vega (c. 1501–36). Some titles of spiritual literature produced at this time include *Las obras de Boscán y Garcilaso trasladadas en materias christianas y religiosas* (Sebastián de Córdova, 1575); *Cristo*

---

<sup>89</sup> “Insomma il Berni espianta (quasi) inesorabilmente la moralità laica e cortese del Boiardo—fatta eccezione per pochi episodi d'inerzia o d'ignavia—quando questa è dichiarata; al suo posto impianta, con ben più meditata larghezza, una siepe folta di esordi, retti da una moralità conformista e devozionale, catechistica persino. È un predicatore, talvolta arguto, più spesso accigliato e pedante, che prende per primo la parola a ogni apertura di canto e mette in riga il lettore, ricreandolo e ammaestrandolo a una lezione di ortodossa dottrina e di saggia moralità: un quaresimale che imbastisce diligentemente il poema con una formula fissa di attacco: il proemio del benpensante, dell'uomo ‘dabbene’” [“Overall Berni removes (almost) inexorably the laic and courtly morality of Boiardo—making an exception for a few episodes of inertia or laziness. When this is declared, in its place is implanted, with much more meditated largess, a thick hedge of preambles, held together by a conformist and devotional, even catechistic, morality. He is a preacher, sometimes clever, more often perplexed and pedantic, who takes firstly the word at every opening of a canto and puts the reader in line, re-creating it and giving it a lesson of orthodox doctrine and sage morality: a Lenten text that diligently assembles the poem with a fixed formula of attack: the proem of the hard thinker, of the ‘decent’ man”] (Romei 190).

<sup>90</sup> The spiritualization genre may also have been known to South Americans in the sixteenth century. El Inca Garcilaso (a Peruvian author, born Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, 1539–1616) expressed the desire for someone to spiritualize the works of Garci Sánchez de Badajoz (1460–1526) ‘in the style of the Italians’: “El propio Inca Garcilaso estaba al tanto de esa práctica italiana cuando expresa su deseo de que alguien en España se encargue de ‘divinizar’ a Garci Sánchez ‘a ymitacion de los Ytalianos (que luego que les vedan qualquiera de sus obras, la corrigen y buelven a imprimir por que la memoria del Autor no se pierda...)” [“El Inca Garcilaso himself was aware of this Italian practice when he expressed his desire for someone in Spain to ‘divinize’ Garci Sánchez ‘in the imitation of the Italians (so that, after having any of his works banned, they would correct it and reprint it so that the author’s memory would not be lost...)”] (Mazzotti, “Garcilaso en el Inca Garcilaso: los alcances de un nombre” 194).

*Nuestro Señor en los versos del príncipe de nuestros poetas, Garcilaso de la Vega, sacados de diferentes partes y unidos con ley de centones* (Juan Andosilla Larramendi, 1628); and *Primera parte de la Clara Diana, ripartida en siete libros* (Bartolomé Ponce, 1580).<sup>91</sup>

While Garcilaso heavily imitated Petrarch's style in composing his own poetry, he did not necessarily repurpose the Italian poet's words for spiritual ends, nor did he fully enter into the spiritualization 'genre.' However, according to Ignacio Navarrete, Garcilaso did "remotivate" Petrarch's *canzone* 23, re-appropriating not only the Petrarchan motif present within but also "making the spoils unmistakably his own" (95). Garcilaso was a very close reader of Petrarch and often borrowed words or phrases from Petrarch's poems to include in his own poetry; he managed to disguise this 'plundering' by imitating a host of other poets alongside Petrarch. Navarrete sees these actions as Garcilaso "performing a metalepsis, reducing Petrarch to the status of one among many predecessor poets, and presenting himself as the fulfillment of all preceding traditions" (73). Garcilaso's mentor, Juan Boscán (c. 1490–1542), also copied Petrarch's style and syntax in his own poetry. In fact, his most famous poem is entitled "Claros y frescos ríos," which has a clear departure point from Petrarch's *canzone* CXXVI, "Chiare fresche et dolci acque" (Navarrete 81). However, Boscán also did not spiritualize Petrarch's poetry—he merely imitated it, sometimes a little too closely for comfort, just as Garcilaso had done.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> For more titles, see Joseph G. Fucilla, "The Pedigree of a *soneto a lo divino*," Mazzotti, and Ignacio Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance*.

<sup>92</sup> "Boscán's techniques—a careful web of literary allusion, themes carried over from sonnet to sonnet, and images recalled across the space of many poems—are borrowed from Petrarch, but they must be examined with a literary theory that has a place for them. When this is done, Boscán's collection as a

As a character in his own poetry, Boscán arrives at the end of his *cancionero* (entitled *Las obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilasso de la Vega*, 1543) as a man who has already found salvation. This differs from Petrarch's journey from his position in the first poem to that of the last, where he struggles, with no apparent success, at redirecting his love for Laura and earthly things toward the divine and attaining salvation. Petrarch encounters, and seeks to remedy, this same struggle in his *Secretum*. Franciscus (really, Petrarch) walks away from his imagined conversation with Augustine enlightened but not wholly changed, since he still clings so fiercely to earthly love; regardless, Petrarch the poet is cognizant of his need to 'spiritualize' his poetry and focus on divine objectives: this is the only clear path to salvation. Since Boscán's poetic avatar has already attained salvation, there is no need to spiritualize either his own poetry nor Petrarch's, even though he frequently copies the words, imagery, and motifs present in the Italian poet's works.

After Garcilaso and Boscán, the Spanish author Sebastián de Córdoba was the next to make use of *divinización*, also of Italian poetry. José Antonio Mazzotti attributes the development of mysticism (particularly that of San Juan de la Cruz) at the end of the sixteenth century to the actions of de Córdoba: "...in Spain the divinizations of profane poets and poems had been made following the traditional forms of songbooks, while the contribution of Sebastián de Córdoba was to use the Italian meters and stanzas for divine subjects, which would certainly facilitate the development of the mysticism of San Juan de la Cruz at the end of the sixteenth century" (194).<sup>93</sup>

---

whole is seen not as a weak copy of Petrarch, but instead as a strong work that stands not only on its own, but in tension with the original" (Navarrete 90).

<sup>93</sup> "...en España las divinizaciones de poetas y poemas profanos se habían hecho siguiendo las formas tradicionales de los cancioneros, mientras que el aporte de Sebastián de Córdoba fue el utilizar los

## IV.2 France

France's literary tradition of rewriting already-existent works of literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is quite different than that of Italy's. One might assume that the most 'fixable' works would be Molière's plays, especially *Tartuffe* (first performed in 1664), and François Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel* (1532–34): the latter was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books as early as 1564.<sup>94</sup> However, to my knowledge, there is no spiritualizing, allegorizing, or moralizing treatment of these authors done at this time that follows the same pattern as the spiritualization of Boccaccio, Petrarch, and other Italian writers I have previously discussed. What we do find, instead of a complete overhaul and rewriting of *Gargantua et Pantagruel* à la the *Decamerone Spirituale*, are versions of the text published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that have been slightly altered to conform to Protestant values and which claim to 'clean up' the text in minor ways. These modifications, in turn, led to a resurgence in the readership of Rabelais. Samuel Kinser writes:

What happened during that century and a half [1711–52], first to diminish and then to revive interest in Rabelais? The eclipse of publishers' willingness to print his works in France, at least openly, came after the Lyon editions of 1608, which appeared just before King Henry IV's assassination in 1610. During the regency of Marie de Médicis and the subsequent ministry of Cardinal Richelieu the government assumed a more publicly Catholic stance. From the point of view of Catholic reconciliation as well as of *bienséance*, Rabelais's texts were not suitable. Rabelais had been classified since 1564 in the Index of Prohibited Books endorsed by the Council of Trent as an author in the 'first class,' whose

---

metros y estrofas italianos para asuntos divinos, lo que facilitaría sin duda el desarrollo de la mística de San Juan de la Cruz a fines de XVI."

<sup>94</sup> Regarding the censorship and revisions of *Tartuffe*, see Mechele Leon, "The Poet and the Prince: Revising Molière and *Tartuffe* in the French Revolution."

works were to be prohibited without exception and without hope of expurgation.

Perhaps this very prohibition was responsible for Rabelais's posthumous fortune during the period of the sanguinary Religious Wars in France (1562–1596). The period was one of political no less than religious disunity ... What a revelation it therefore is to discover that all but five editions of Rabelais published in the half-century after his death can be shown to have been altered in their wording in such a way as to serve Protestantism!<sup>95</sup>

In other words, the new, edited text was not branded as a “Spiritual Rabelais” nor a “Spiritual Gargantua and Pantagruel.” What censors did to the text was merely to alter any passages that denounced Calvinism and ensure that some of the bawdier passages were tamed.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century a large number of books with titles featuring the word “moralized” (*moralisé*) were published in France. It is important to note here that the word *moralisé(e)* in this case does not mean spiritualized, or even ‘made to be more moral’; rather, the authors are using abstract metaphors to reason out other larger concepts. The *Jeu des échecs moralisé* (“Moralized Game of Chess”) uses the popular game to explain the functions of society under the rule of a king and queen, and the illustrations in the *Bibles moralisées* (“moralized Bibles”) provide pictorial exegeses for their audiences (especially those who were illiterate).<sup>96</sup>

In addition to these titles, one of the more well-known ‘moralized’ works is the *Ovide moralisé*, written at the end of the fourteenth century and attributed, perhaps falsely, to Philippe de Vitry. The *Ovide moralisé* is a mix of translation and allegorization

---

<sup>95</sup> Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* 128.

<sup>96</sup> For more information on the *Jeu des échecs moralisé* and the *Bibles moralisées*, see: the website of the University of Chicago Library (“Rose & Chess,” <http://roseandchess.lib.uchicago.edu/chess.html>); and John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées*.



of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* done by de Vitry and others (the Philomena tale was written by Chrétien de Troyes); Geoffrey Chaucer and Guillaume de Machaut later drew inspiration from this moralized version of Ovid and imitated it more often than Ovid's original writing.<sup>97</sup> John Livingston Lowes notes that Chaucer undoubtedly used both sources to compose a "*rifaciamento*" [*sic*] of the Philomena tale ("Chaucer without question knew the Latin text of the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses*," 303); however, he does so in such a way that he not only retells the tale, but he also "heightens Ovid's effectiveness" in telling it.<sup>98</sup> As I will note in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, the Philomena tale is especially fascinating due to its brutal silencing of a female character and this action's connection to the tradition of spiritualization of literature (which largely silenced female characters). The story varies in length between Ovid, de Vitry and Chaucer (the authors write 55 lines, 524 lines and 22 lines, respectively), and the name of the character varies as well (between Philomena and Philomela). Regardless, the story remains essentially the

---

<sup>97</sup> See John Livingston Lowes, "Chaucer and the *Ovide moralisé*" 323. Lowes adds that, in addition to using source material from the *Ovide moralisé*, instead of directly from Ovid, both Chaucer and Machaut also tend to 'misunderstand,' or misappropriate, other sources of similar, mythological stories (e.g. from Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*, Servius, Lactantius, and others). He writes: "Professor [Cees] de Boer has recently shown that Machaut owed his knowledge of Ovid very largely to the *Ovide moralisé*: 'Les connaissances que Guillaume de Machaut a eues de la littérature latine ont probablement été moins grandes qu'on n'avait été obligé de l'admettre jusqu'ici, puisqu'il emprunte le sujet (et quelquefois même la forme) de tous ses 'exemples' antiques à un ouvrage français contemporain, l'*Ovide moralisé*' ['Guillaume de Machaut's knowledge of Latin literature was probably smaller than he would have liked to admit hitherto, since he lends the subject (and sometimes even the form) of all his ancient 'examples' to a contemporary French work, the *Ovide moralisé*']" (Lowes 320).

<sup>98</sup> Lowes 318: "In a word, what interests [Chaucer] in the *Ovide moralisé* is not what chiefly engaged its author, but the new turns given to the narrative. Where [John] Gower omits or slurs over even Ovid's most telling details, Chaucer heightens Ovid's effectiveness by a dexterous interweaving of fresh narrative touches from the French recasting of the tale."

same each time, with minor revisions (or major additions), and is not so much censored as altered.<sup>99</sup>

Another title that stands out in the French ‘moralization’ tradition is the *Roman de la Rose moralisé*, written by Jean Molinet in 1500; the work receiving the moralizing treatment is the *Roman de la rose*, written by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun (c. 1235 and c. 1275, respectively). Claire M. Croft likens this reworking of the text (and of the *Metamorphoses* into the *Ovide moralisé*) to the relationship between the mythical figure Pygmalion and his sculpture-cum-woman Galatea, where the text is Galatea and Molinet (as well as, one could say, all spiritualizing and moralizing authors) is Pygmalion.<sup>100</sup> Molinet’s work begins with a jocular verse:

C’est le Romant de la Rose,  
moralisé cler et net,  
translaté de rime en prose  
par vostre humble Molinet.<sup>101</sup>

While it appears that Molinet has simply edited the text to make it “cler et net,” he goes far beyond this: he also performs allegoresis and exegesis on the original text in order to participate in debates on nature and art, among other subjects. Molinet likely undertook

---

<sup>99</sup> N.b.: These works are not to be confused with the 1340 *Ovidius moralizatus* written by Petrus Berchorius (a.k.a. Pierre Bersuire), which also moralized the *Metamorphoses* and made many parallels between mythological figures and Christ (e.g., the flight of Perseus to represent the ascension of Christ into Heaven). See John M. Steadman, “Perseus Upon Pegasus and *Ovid Moralized*.” Bersuire also wrote moralizations (“reductorium morale”) on the Bible.

<sup>100</sup> See Claire M. Croft, “Pygmalion and the Metamorphosis of Meaning in Jean Molinet’s *Roman de la Rose moralisé*”; see also Michael Randall, “The Fountain of Life in Molinet’s *Roman de la rose moralisé* (1500).”

<sup>101</sup> “This is the Romance of the Rose / moralized clearly and tidily, / translated from rhyme to prose / by your humble Molinet.”

this project in response to the harsh criticism heaped on the text by Jean Gerson and Christine de Pizan for its irreverence and ‘dangerous’ content.<sup>102</sup>

### IV.3 England

In England, any spiritualization, moralization, or religious-minded rewriting of literature did not occur until the seventeenth century. The seventeenth century saw a sharp rise in religious lyric poetry, but many of these works merely imitated the style of others and did not stray into the ‘rewriting’ category. Dramatists, composers and opera librettists created various adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, and Shakespeare himself rewrote and retold a number of tales from antiquity (e.g. the tale of Troilus and Cressida, whose story also appears in Boccaccio’s *Filostrato* and in a titular poem by Chaucer). John Milton’s *Paradise Regained* (1671) was the poet’s own response to his larger, more famous *Paradise Lost* (1667). One could possibly consider *Paradise Regained* to be a reparative approach to the former work; however, as is the case for Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* and his later work *Gerusalemme conquistata*, the spiritual rewriting aspect is not as prevalent as it is for Dionigi. While other popular works of literature were never banned (e.g. Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and the majority of Shakespeare’s oeuvre), works pertaining to philosophy and economy were placed on the Index for centuries to come (e.g. the works of Calvin, Locke, Hobbes and Mill).<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Gerson composed a treatise warning of the text’s irreverence: “The study of the Bible and of the fathers was to supersede the idle questions of the schools, and in his *Tract. contra romantiam de rosa* (iii. 297) he warns young men against the evil consequences of mediaeval romance-reading” (*The Encyclopædia Britannica* vol. 10, 491).

<sup>103</sup> See Fordham University’s webpage on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* for a longer list of authors and titles (<http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/indexlibrorum.asp>).

Although Shakespeare's plays were not placed on the Index of Prohibited Books, there are instances of moralized rewritings of his works published in the nineteenth century; namely, Thomas Bowdler's *The Family Shakspeare, in one volume; in which nothing is added to the original text, but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family* (1818). Bowdler expresses his objectives in his preface to the work:

My great objects in this undertaking are to remove from the writings of Shakspeare, some defects which diminish their value; and, at the same time, to present to the public an edition of his Plays, which the parent, the guardian, and the instructor of youth, may place without fear in the hands of the pupil; and from which the pupil may derive instruction as well as pleasure; may improve his moral principles, while he refines his taste; and without incurring the danger of being hurt with any indelicacy of expression, may learn in the fate of Macbeth, that even a kingdom is dearly purchased, if virtue be the price of acquisition. (Bowdler viii)

By resituating Shakespeare's plays so that they take place in the privacy of the home or schoolroom instead of in public or on the stage, Bowdler seeks to make the tales, and the messages delivered within, more family-oriented and less likely to encourage immoral behavior in their impressionable readers. A review of the *Family Shakspeare* by Francis Jeffrey in 1821 corroborates this objective:

There are many passages in Shakespeare which a father could not read aloud to his children—a brother to his sister—or a gentlemen to a lady:—and every one almost must have felt or witnessed the extreme awkwardness, and even distress, that arises from suddenly stumbling upon such expressions, when it is almost too late to avoid them, and when the readiest wit cannot suggest any paraphrase which shall not betray, by its harshness, the embarrassment from which it has arisen. Those who recollect such scenes, must all rejoice that Mr. Bowdler has provided a security against their recurrence.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Jeffrey, qtd. in Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* 85.

It is no wonder that Bowdler's name and literary activity inspired the verb "bowdlerize," a term synonymous with expurgating or 'sanitizing' a text.

## **V. Spiritualization and Rewriting of Italian Literature After the Seventeenth Century**

The spiritualization of Italian literature dwindled after the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it did not disappear entirely. In music, use of the *contrafactum* continued well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mostly in opera or in devotional music. German musicologist Linda Maria Koldau has dedicated years of study to the *contrafactum* tradition, not only in literature but also in music, especially in the works of Claudio Monteverdi.<sup>105</sup> Biblical and hagiographical poetry, which featured many titles including the words *rime spirituali*, remained popular at this time as well. Authors experimented with the spiritualization genre even into the twentieth century: Antonio Fogazzaro wrote a novel entitled *Il Santo* in 1905, which was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, the same Index that banned the works of Boccaccio and other authors I have examined in this chapter. Fogazzaro also came under fire by the Catholic Church when he attempted to harmonize Catholic theology and Darwinian evolutionary theory in a piece entitled "Per un recente raffronto delle teorie di Sant'Agostino e di Darwin circa la creazione" (1892).<sup>106</sup> Matteo Brera's recent monograph, *Novecento all'Indice: Gabriele D'Annunzio, i libri proibiti e i rapporti Stato-Chiesa all'ombra del Concordato* (2016), delves deeper into Fogazzaro's and D'Annunzio's works and their

---

<sup>105</sup> See Koldau and Anna Ficarella, "'Non sit quid volo sed fiat quod tibi placet': I 'contrafacta' sacri del 'Lamento d'Arianna' di Claudio Monteverdi"; and Koldau, *Die venezianische Kirchenmusik von Claudio Monteverdi*.

<sup>106</sup> See Glick and Shaffer, *The Literary and Cultural Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe* 488.

placement on the Index in the twentieth century, as well as the relationship between literature, censorship and fascism in Mussolini's Italy.

Adaptations and rewritings of Italian literature, particularly of the *Decameron*, are numerous no matter the century. Three adaptations of the *Decameron* merit exploration in this chapter, not because they are spiritualizations of the text, but because they are rewritings of Boccaccio's text done by women, featuring all-female *brigade* in two of the three works. These novels are: *The Women's Decameron* (Julia Vosnesenskaya, 1986), *The Spa Decameron* (Fay Weldon, 2007), and *Ten Days in the Hills* (Jane Smiley, 2007). Regina Psaki writes of these works: "The adaptations of the *Decameron* by Julia Vosnesenskaya, Fay Weldon, and Jane Smiley are highly individual books, but they share a strongly feminist perspective on the role of sexual difference in language and in lived experience, from the erotic and the sentimental, to the socioeconomic, to the narrative. Choosing to update the *Decameron* structure, they adapt its thematic patterns, specifically that intersection of women and language."<sup>107</sup>

Of these three novels, the most fascinating (in terms of politics and culture) is *The Women's Decameron*, which takes place in a maternity ward in Soviet Russia in which ten women are quarantined for ten days after giving birth, due to a skin rash. Vosnesenskaya, unlike many of the spiritualizing authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, actually does give credit to Boccaccio through one of her narrators, both for the structure of the storytelling and for the original idea.<sup>108</sup> The themes cover a broad range

---

<sup>107</sup> Psaki, "Alcuna paroletta più liberale": Contemporary Women Authors Address the *Decameron's* Obscenity" 243. See also Barbara Zaczek, "Creating and Recreating Reality with Words: *The Decameron* and *The Women's Decameron*."

<sup>108</sup> Vosnesenskaya, n.p.: "And then it suddenly dawned on Emma. She lifted the *Decameron* high above her head so that everyone could see the fat book in its colorful cover. 'Dear mothers! How many of you have read this book?' Naturally about half of them had. 'Well,' continued Emma, 'for those who

of topics from “First Love” to “Sex in Farcical Situations” to “Rapists and their Victims” and, finally, to “Happiness.” The one hundred stories contained within are, at times, difficult to read: some deal with toxic masculinity and rape, and others with extreme poverty and death under the Soviet surveillance state, which Psaki describes as a “low-profile but high-impact kind of plague” (“Alcuna paroletta più liberale” 45). Despite all of this, the women tell most of the tales with a jocular tone and become friends by the end of their stay in the hospital ward. Weldon’s novel, which also features an all-female *brigata* of sorts, takes place at a spa in present-day England during the Christmas holiday, wherein the women get snowed in and, like Boccaccio’s and Vosnesenkaya’s characters, must tell each other stories to pass the time. Smiley’s *brigata* is divided evenly between male and female characters, who tell stories that include “news items, read from the newspaper, scenes from films, descriptions of films, parables, summaries of college lectures and college essays, dreams, an LSD hallucination, novels as yet unwritten, snippets of war stories, political harangues, memories, reported events, urban legends, extended descriptions of artworks, *Decameron* tales in other dress” (Smiley 255). All three authors, while diverging from the spiritualization genre, manage to reframe the *Decameron* in a modern setting, mostly controlled by female voices and narratives; this type of rewriting reflects contemporary society much more realistically than any Early Modern spiritualization I have come across in my research.<sup>109</sup>

---

haven’t I’ll explain it simply. During a plague ten young men and women leave the city and place themselves in quarantine for ten days, just as they’ve done to us here. Each day they take it in turns to tell each other different stories about life and love, the tricks that clever lovers play and the tragedies that come from love. How about all of us doing the same?”

<sup>109</sup> One other modern adaptation that merits attention is Alexander Hausvater’s 1982 “The *Decameron*: An Entertainment Conceived from Boccaccio,” which takes place in a German concentration camp.

After considering all of these spiritualizations, adaptations, and rewritings of literature over a span of six centuries, I will now turn my attention to Francesco Dionigi da Fano's *Decamerone Spirituale* and flesh out the intricacies within that pertain to the larger themes of my dissertation: authorship, authorial identity, and gender and (the problem of) sexuality in the Counter-Reformation.



## Chapter Two:

### A Case Study: Francesco Dionigi da Fano's *Decamerone Spirituale* (1594)

#### I. Introduction to the Author

Francesco Dionigi da Fano is a hard man to track down. As Paolo Cherchi has already noted, it is difficult to glean any sort of biographical data related to the author of the *Decamerone Spirituale* given that his life is almost completely unrecorded.<sup>110</sup> No entries are to be found in biographical sources concerning either the birth and early life of Francesco Dionigi or the circumstances of his death.<sup>111</sup> The few resources that are available reveal even less about his ecclesiastical life, despite the fact that he is referred to as “M. Rev.,” “reverendo,” “sacerdote,” “prete” or “uomo ecclesiastico” in passing.<sup>112</sup> Some records indicate that Dionigi once served as “capitano di Marotta” in 1568 and fought against invading Turkish forces in the Adriatic.<sup>113</sup> Other sources, such as Church

---

<sup>110</sup> See Cherchi, “Il ‘Decamerone Spirituale’ di Francesco Dionigi da Fano” 321.

<sup>111</sup> One source chronicling the history of music performed and organized in Fano’s main church (R. Paolucci, “La cappella musicale del duomo di Fano: Appunti per una storia”) indicates that Dionigi may have died around or sometime after 1612 after aging and retiring from his post as *capo dei mansionari*: “D. Francesco Dionigi, il bravo musico e capo dei Mansionari che tante volte aveva supplito in mancanza del maestro titolare, e che certamente era stato una delle colonne principali della Cappella musicale, ormai invecchiava e aveva bisogno di aiuto, e i Canonici glielo accordano nel 1612, e eleggono, dietro raccomandazione del Vescovo, D. Andrea Raica o Radica” [“D. Francesco Dionigi, the great musician and head of the Mansionari who many times substituted for the head maestro in his absence, and who certainly was one of the principal columns of the musical chapel, was now aged and in need of help, and the Canon leaders gave him just that in 1612, and elected him, per the recommendation of the Bishop, D. Andrea Raica or Radica”] (Paolucci 106). This is the closest I have come to approximating Dionigi’s year of death.

<sup>112</sup> Only one source (the digitized catalog of the Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna) lists the abbreviation P.M. after Dionigi’s name, which does not seem to correlate to an appropriate religious order (it stands, at least currently, for Sisters of the Presentation of Mary). Based on the sources that Dionigi uses and the themes he expounds upon in the *DS* (namely that Dominican oration is “most pleasing to God” and is the subject of the whole Fourth Day), he was very likely a Dominican priest. I have not been able to confirm this as fact.

<sup>113</sup> “Si sa che Francesco Dionigi nel 1568 a Marotta fu capitano a difesa delle coste adriatiche vessate dalle scorrerie dei turchi” [“We know that Francesco Dionigi in 1568 was captain in Marotta in

histories, indicate that he participated in ecclesiastical music for years. Still, despite all of this, the dates of his birth and death remain a mystery. What we do have is a list of his literary works, which he mostly produced between the 1570s and 1590s. This list was compiled by Filippo Vecchietti in 1795,<sup>114</sup> and comprises the following major works:

1. *Amor cortese. Comedia noua pastorale di Francesco Dionisio da Fano* (1570);<sup>115</sup>
2. *Historia della vita del glorioso s. Paterniano vescouo, e protettore della città di Fano. Scritta in lingua italiana dal r.m. Francesco Dionigi. A spirituale consolatione di tutti i deuoti di questo santo. Aggiuntaui etiandio la sua translatione dalla chiesa di fuori nella noua chiesa nella città, con tutti i minuti particolari, che occorsero in quel tempo, cauati da scritture autentiche, e da molte memorie, che si fecero all'hora per dichiarazione del fatto, con la sacra etiandio di detta chiesa* (1591);

---

defense of the Adriatic coast oppressed by the incursions of the Turks"] (Longoni, "Una cinquecentina fanese misconosciuta" 224n5).

<sup>114</sup> Vecchietti, *Biblioteca Picena, o sia Notizie Istoriche delle opere e degli scrittori Piceni, Tomo Quarto*.

<sup>115</sup> Vecchietti indicates that this may be a false attribution, mistakenly given to Francesco Dionigi when it should belong to one Scipione Dionigi. He takes this from Leone Allacci, a Greek historian who worked at the Vatican library in the seventeenth century: "L' Allacci nella sua *Drammaturgia* ne fa autore Scipione Dionigi parimente Fanese, ma dall'erudito Quadrio viene attribuita a Francesco, di cui parlasi, e che sappiamo infatti aver avuto del genio per tal sorta di componimenti" ["Allacci in his *Drammaturgia* makes the author of this work Scipione Dionigi, also Fanese, but the erudite Quadrio attributes it to Francesco, of which it is said, and that we know, in fact, had had the genius for that type of composition"] (Vecchietti 6). Castellani remarks on the *Amor Cortese*: "In parte, perché questo buon prete, infiammato di *santo zelo per la propaganda dell'ascetismo* e del buon costume, parrebbe che male avesse potuto trattare un soggetto profano e leggero. Ma chi ha letto l' *Amor Cortese*? Chi sa se il soggetto sia sacro o profano?" ["In part, because this good priest, inflamed of *holy zeal for the propaganda of asceticism* and of good habits, felt that he could treat badly a profane and light subject. But who has read the *Amor Cortese*? Who knows if the subject is sacred or profane?"] (*La Bibliofilia* 76; italics mine).

3. *Deuota rappresentatione de i martirii di santa Christina vergine, e  
martire di Giesu Christo di nuouo composta dal reuer.do m. Francesco  
Dionigi da Fano (1592).*<sup>116</sup>

Vecchietti catalogues these works and provides commentary on a few of them (see notes); he also mentions various undated *versi* and *ballate spirituali* produced by the author,<sup>117</sup> as well as a work entitled *Tesoro della lingua Toscana* (despite the author's non-Tuscan origins).<sup>118</sup> The *DS*, in Vecchietti's timeline, appears to be Dionigi's final production; however, another search reveals the following title, produced nearly a decade after the *DS* and published through the Giunti house in Florence: "Dionigi, Francesco (sec. 16–17). *Echo divina septem vocibus respondens illustriss., ac reverendiss. d.d. Pompeo Arrigonio Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinali ... a fratre Augustino de Cortona. Florentiae: apud Iuntas, 1609.*"<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> It may be worth mentioning that several sources cataloguing the book collection of Galileo include this work among the scientist's personal library. Franco Longoni observes that the *sacra rappresentatione* of Saint Christina includes "infine 4 intermezzi che riguardano celeberrimi episodi biblici, come Davide e Golia o il giudizio di re Salomone" ["4 *intermezzi* which regard celebrated Biblical episodes, such as the story of David and Goliath, or the judgment of King Solomon"] (Longoni 224n2).

<sup>117</sup> "*Versi*. Alcune di lui *Ballate spirituali* sono menzionate dal Quadrio e così pure dal medesimo ci fa noto, che in un libro, intitolato: *Rime di diversi ms. in 4 presso il canonico Amadei*, si leggevano più rime di Francesco Dionigi, il quale, per attestato dell'anonimo autore della citata *Storia Fanese*, stampò eziandio ..." ["*Verses*. Some of his spiritual *Ballads* are mentioned by Quadrio, and he also makes note that, in a book entitled *Rime di diversi ms. in quarto presso il canonico Amadei*, one read more poems of Francesco Dionigi, who, attested by the anonymous author of the cited *Storia Fanese*, printed..." ] (sentence left unfinished; Vecchietti 7).

<sup>118</sup> "...e lasciò inoltre in 4. volumi a penna un *Tesoro di lingua Toscana* che lo storico si lusingava poter *gareggiare colla Crusca Fiorentina*; ma da noi non si ha il coraggio di approvare questo confronto" ["...and he left also in 4 volumes in writing a *Tesoro di lingua Toscana*, which the historian bragged could compete with the Florentine [Accademia della] *Crusca*; but on our part we do not have the courage to approve this confrontation"] (Vecchietti 7).

<sup>119</sup> Found in the digital catalog of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (www.bncf.firenze.sbn.it).

Before cataloging Dionigi's work, Vecchietti provides a brief encyclopedic summary of Dionigi as an author without telling us much about the facts of his life. He writes:

Francesco Dionigi, Fanese man of letters of the 16th century, *singularly cultivated the Tuscan language*, in which he wrote as many prose works as works in verse. One sees that he had as much merit also in music, to which the anonymous author of the *History of Fano* manuscript attests. *Being a man of the church, he sought to disentangle the world from the dangerous reading of the Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio*, in writing a new one that was totally spiritual and devout, of which nonetheless little esteem has been given by Quadrio ... who deems it to be far inferior to that of Boccaccio, notwithstanding the fact that Dionigi put in a great amount of study in order to emulate the beauties of the text, and the language. We are not very much persuaded by this judgment: but all the same we believe that we cannot deny merit to the author for at least good intentions, even more so that his components are as poetic as they are prosaic, and they aim always to augment Christian piety, just as the rest of the catalogue of his productions.<sup>120</sup>

Vecchietti seems to indicate in this passage that Dionigi's efforts were well-meant, but fell below the mark: although the "uom di chiesa" produced many well-researched poetic and prosaic works devoted to his religious inclinations, which do deserve merit, his attempt at removing or "detaching" (*distogliere*) the "dangerous" content of Boccaccio's *Decameron* from the world was ultimately a failure. Francesco Saver Quadrio (1752),

---

<sup>120</sup> "DIONIGI (Francesco) buon letterato Fanese del secolo XVI, *coltivò singolarmente la lingua toscana*, in cui molte cose scrisse tanto in prosa, che in verso. Si vuole, ch'egli avesse del merito anche nella musica, come ne attesta l'autore dell'anonima Storia ms. di Fano. *Essendo stato uom di chiesa, si propose di distogliere il mondo dalla pericolosa lettura del Decamerone di Giovanni Boccaccio*, con iscriverne uno tutto spirituale e divoto, di cui nondimeno pochissima stima si è fatta dal dotto Quadrio ... che il giudica di gran lunga inferiore a quello di esso Boccaccio, non ostante, che il Dionigi molto studio ponesse per emularne le bellezze, e la lingua. Siam noi persuasi pur troppo della piena veracità di questo giudizio: ma tuttavia crediamo non doversi negare all'autore il merito per lo meno di una buona volontà, tanto più che i di lui componimenti si poetici, che prosaici, ebbero sempre di mira di giovare alla pietà cristiana, come dall'appresso catalogo delle di lui produzioni" (Vecchietti 6; italics my own).

quoted in this passage, agrees, adding a small barb in suggesting that Dionigi might well have saved time and money by abandoning the project altogether.<sup>121</sup>

Vittore Branca found many connections between the hardships that Boccaccio experienced in his mercantile work early in life, which then contributed to “the fascination of the *Decameron*’s mercantile tales and their capacity to develop and gravitate around the representation of a milieu, which, at times, appears as the work’s true protagonist.”<sup>122</sup> Just as Boccaccio’s experience as a merchant in his early life heavily influenced the representation of his *Decameron* characters, so did Dionigi’s ecclesiastical background shape the attributions of his characters. Since we do not know the details of Dionigi’s birth, it is also impossible, at least for now, to glean any facts about his family and upbringing. However, reading the *DS* in the context of the spiritual and ecclesiastical culture of the Counter-Reformation may give more of an insight into his life and background, just as the mercantile ‘protagonist’ of the *Decameron* ties directly into Boccaccio’s early life and career.<sup>123</sup> We do know that Dionigi’s brother Bartolomeo was

---

<sup>121</sup> “Francesco Dionigi da Fano, uomo pieno di zelo, volendo dalla pericolosa lezione di quest’opera distornare il mondo, pensò egli di fare un Decamerone Spirituale, nel quale però studio grandissimo pose per emulare di quello del Boccaccio le bellezze, e la lingua. Poteva risparmiare così terribil fatica: poichè si all’uno che all’altro disegno, inutile affatto riuscì, e perduta. Questo Decamerone Spirituale fu impresso in Venezia per gli Eredi di Giovanni Varisco nel 1594 in 4. Ma per finire d’esarlo dovè per avventura lo stampatore buona porzione donarne” [“Francesco Dionigi da Fano, a man full of zeal, wishing to turn the world away from the dangerous lessons of this work, thought to make a spiritual Decameron, in which he studied quite a lot to emulate the beauties and language of Boccaccio’s text. He could have saved a lot of effort: since, due to one design or another, his aim was futile and lost. This spiritual Decameron was printed in Venice by the house of Giovanni Varisco in 1594 in quarto. But in order to finish publishing it the printer had to donate a good portion of the prints”] (Quadrio, qtd. in Cherchi 321).

<sup>122</sup> Branca, “The Epic of the Italian Merchant” 39.

<sup>123</sup> “Boccaccio’s mercantile experience furnished him with a perspective for observing contemporary life through which he could see beyond communal, regional, and national confines, throughout civilised Europe and the eventful Mediterranean: throughout the entire boundless arena open to the enterprise of those heroes of trade and continuously covered by their swift and wonderful messengers” (Branca, “Epic” 40).

another prominent author working at the same time. Bartolomeo was also a priest and wrote an impressive number of works on geography, cartography, lives of saints, histories of the Bible, and world histories; however, like Francesco, his birth and death dates can not be found at present.<sup>124</sup>

Apart from Vecchietti and Quadrio, Dionigi's work appears in various book catalogues of the nineteenth century; a few of these catalogues briefly mention his other works (listed above), and even fewer provide comments on the *DS*. These commentators include Vittorio Imbriani (*Nuova Crestomazia italiana per le scuole secondarie*, 1886), Antonio Vergili (*Francesco Berni, con documenti inediti*, 1881),<sup>125</sup> and Nicola Francesco Haym (*Biblioteca italiana, ossia notizia de' libri rari italiani...*, 1808). Readers will notice that these critics and cataloguers include Dionigi among groups such as the Deputati and other religiously affiliated organizations whose objectives were to purify or 'purge' the pages of the *Decameron* for purer public consumption.

---

<sup>124</sup> See "Dionigi, Bartolomeo" on the CERL (Consortium of European Research Libraries) Thesaurus (<http://thesaurus.cerl.org/record/cnp01347829>) for a longer, more definitive record of Bartolomeo's works.

<sup>125</sup> "I Deputati a 'medicare' come essi dicono, il *Decamerone*, furono Vincenzo Borghini, Pierfrancesco Cambi e Bastiano Antinori. Nove anni dopo (1582), per quelle ragioni che tutti sanno, toccò al povero Boccaccio un'altra medicatura per opera di quel Lionardo Salviati, così abile tormentatore di testi e di teste di genio: e così andando di questo passo, non mancò neppure chi 'allo spirito pretese con pia intenzione di ridurlo.' Queste sono parole del Manni (*Prefaz. alla Storia del Decamerone*, pag. ix) e alludono a certo 'Decamerone spirituale' che un Francesco Dionigi da Fano pubblicò il 1594 in Venezia per gli eredi di Gio. Varisco, ove ogni giornata è divisa in dieci ragionamenti spirituali, e le giornate terminano con ballate e canzonette pure spirituali. [...] Mi pare che ci manchi proprio pochino a farne brevi da regalare alle donne" ["The Deputati who 'medicated', as they say, the *Decameron*, were Vincenzo Borghini, Pierfrancesco Cambi and Bastiano Antinori. Nine years later (1582), for reasons we all know, it was poor Boccaccio's turn to receive another medication by that Lionardo Salviati, the able tormentor of texts and authors of the kind: and so going down this road, he did not miss the chance to 'use the spirit to reduce the text with pious intentions.' These are the words of Manni ... and they allude to a certain 'spiritual Decameron' that Francesco Dionigi da Fano published in 1594 ... where every Day is divided into ten spiritual *ragionamenti*, and the Days end with ballads and songs that are also spiritual. [...] I think we are missing quite a bit making it brief to gift it to women"] (Vergili 156n1).

## II. Historical Background of the *DS*: Fano and the 1590 Famine

The famine that hit the north of Italy (and various parts of neighboring countries) was the worst famine since the emergence of the Black Death in the 1340s.<sup>126</sup> It was an epidemic which “deeply disrupt[ed] traditional equilibria”<sup>127</sup> and, like the bubonic plague, also caused widespread social and economic breakdown. The 1590 famine was precipitated by a too-rapid demographic growth competing with declining natural resources. The real crisis began after 1590, as Guido Alfani notes, when “the reserves had become exhausted, and cities and communities were now badly indebted given the cost of buying grain abroad, especially in Northern Europe where the situation was not yet critical” (22). With the depletion of grain eventually came the depletion of the population, and not due to deaths caused by hunger alone; historical demographers note that, differently from cases of plague, where the population is affected indiscriminately, famine causes a sharp decrease in marriages and birth rates as the affected population quickly changes family-planning methods in response to the crisis. However, Alfani adds, “If births are very sensitive indicators of the occurrence of a food crisis, the famine of the 1590s was characterized also by exceptional mortality” (25).

Socially, the famine also had effects similar to those of the plague: those who survived the lack of sustenance either turned to begging as a way of prolonging their lives, faced violent bandits who pilfered what little was left of crops and material goods,

---

<sup>126</sup> For more information regarding the famine in Fano and northern Italy, see the following: Pietro-Maria Amiani, *Memorie istoriche della città di Fano*; *Gli Studi in Italia. Anno III, Vol. 1: Periodo didattico scientifico e letterario*; and Alfonso Corradi, *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850*, vol. 2., *Parte seconda: Dal 1501 a tutto il 1600*.

<sup>127</sup> Alfani, “The Famine of the 1590s in Northern Italy. An Analysis of the Greatest ‘System Shock’ of [the] Sixteenth Century” 44.

or succumbed to other diseases (e.g. typhus) which ravaged their weakened bodies with exceptional force. Violence was especially a problem, which forced government authorities to expel ‘problem citizens’ from the city. This is typical for a crisis like a famine: “During a famine the crime rate and the general propensity for violence increase dramatically. City authorities were well aware of this, and during severe subsistence crises they regularly decided to expel the so-called ‘useless mouths’: people without citizenship, who were beggars, jobless foreigners, or even those employed but without any highly professionalizing skill” (Alfani 31). The more mouths there were to fill, the harder it was to solve the many problems that the famine introduced. Even in the countryside, things were not much better: hungry city-dwellers moved to the outskirts of Fano to gather whatever crops were left; simultaneously, poor country residents moved into the city looking for grain, bringing diseases with them and making the already crowded cityscape even more cramped. In the end, however, more people died in the countryside than in the city.

Aside from the violence that sprung up, the famine also caused many citizens to experience psychological hardships. As Alfani observes, “The human body has an exceptional capacity to survive prolonged starvation. Actually, the number of people dying literally ‘of hunger’ was usually very limited, more usual causes of death being ‘complications’ and in particular infectious diseases (such as typhus) or poisoning caused by consuming inedible or rotten ingredients” (38). While the bubonic plague was terrifying in its capacity to kill swiftly and move quickly through the city, the famine’s effects on a single human being lasted much longer, prolonging the suffering. Furthermore, despite not being physically contagious, famine hit large swaths of the



population, especially whole families. The suffering, coupled with the city's reduced population due to changing trends in marriage and reproduction, certainly contributed to a vastly different dynamic for the city as a whole.

The city of Florence, for Boccaccio, is not only the setting for the vast majority of his *Decameron* tales, but is in itself another 'protagonist' of the work. In the Proem and Introduction to the *Decameron*, Boccaccio highlights (in his own words and through the mouths of his *brigata*) how the city—especially in the wake of the plague—contributes to the narrative in a unique way. The same goes for Dionigi in relation to his hometown of Fano, located in an entirely different region of Italy (in the Pesaro-Urbino province of the Marche). Despite all the information that Dionigi provides in his Introduction to the *DS*, his words barely differ from Boccaccio's, save a change in wording or syntax in a few places. Dionigi's (and Fano's) main assailant and antagonist is a famine, not a plague; however, he describes the famine in almost exactly the same words as Boccaccio uses to narrate the horrors of the plague, even though the two affect the characters of their works very differently. Regardless, both city's sufferers are to be treated with compassion; Boccaccio writes: "Umana cosa è aver compassione degli afflitti"; Dionigi: "Christiana cosa è compatir' all'afflittioni de' miseri." Although the bubonic plague differs from famine in many ways (mode of transmission and contagion, length of suffering, outward symptoms, etc.), we can see how similar the diseases are as functioning, menacing presences in both *Decamerons*.

Dionigi begins the second paragraph of his Introduction to Day One as follows:

Dico adunque, ch'erano già gli anni, dopo la natività dell'eterno Verbo incarnato, arrivati al numero di Mille, e cinquecento novanta; quando nella nobile Città di Fano, com'anche in tutta Italia, e in molte parti del mondo, era nata la *pestifera carestia*: la quale essendo, ò per la sterilità della terra,

ò per le nostre malvagie operationi, per giusto giudicio di Dio, à nostro castigo mandata sopra le genti, in così fatta maniera crebbe, che particolarmente in quella Città à un numero quasi infinito di viventi diede miserabilmente la morte.<sup>128</sup>

Seeing how similar the verbiage is between Boccaccio and Dionigi, and considering how much of the *DS* macrotext echoes Boccaccio's prose, it would be a waste of time to perform a strictly philological comparison of the two works. For this dissertation, and specifically for this chapter, my interest lies in the borrowing—even plagiarizing—on the part of Dionigi of Boccaccio's descriptions in the macrotext in order to create the same sense of reality for his own *Decameron*, and to create a more successful authorial identity for himself. While I will consider Dionigi's authorial figure later in this chapter, I will concentrate now on the concept of disease and illness as it pertains to both Dionigi and Boccaccio, as well as how it shapes their texts.

In describing the famine that overtook the city of Fano, Dionigi makes sure to mention several times that this is no ordinary (i.e. religious) fast, and, as we have seen in the quote above, he views the famine as a “pestiferous” epidemic.<sup>129</sup> Although famine, unlike the bubonic plague, was not contagious in any way, it pulled Italian families apart much in the same fashion as did the plague. Boccaccio adds that, contingent upon the

---

<sup>128</sup> *DS* I Intr.; italics my own. Compare the syntax to Boccaccio's: “Dico adunque che già erano gli anni della fruttifera incarnazione del Figliuolo di Dio al numero pervenuti di militrecentoquarantotto, quando nella egregia città di Fiorenza, oltre a ogn'altra italica bellissima, pervenne la mortifera pestilenza: la quale, per operatione de' corpi superiori o per le nostre inique opere da giusta ira di Dio a nostra correzione mandata sopra i mortali, alquanti anni davanti nelle parti orientali incominciata, quelle d'numerabile quantità de' viventi avendo private, senza restare d'un luogo in uno altro continuandosi, verso l'Occidente miserabilmente s'era ampliata” (*Decameron* I Intr., 8).

<sup>129</sup> “...qui nella misera Città altro non s'ode, che stridori di poverelli, & altro non vi si vede, che faccie impallidite, *non dico del digiuno solamente, ma della fame*; e per quella i miseri languire...” [“...here in our miserable City you hear nothing but the screams of the poor, and see nothing but pallid faces, *I am not talking only of fasting, but of hunger*; and for that the miserable ones languish...”] (*DS* I Intr.; emphasis mine).

dissolution of the family structure—as well as the collapse of the city’s government—was the freedom which allowed formerly chaste and newly-widowed women to become sexually brazen and, in turn, impure. Women were not the only ones liberated sexually by the plague; as Pampinea notes, monks who had been seeking clandestine sexual encounters were now free to fulfill their carnal *appetites*—a word that doesn’t fit as well in time of famine, nor in a ‘spiritual’ work. Esther Zago has written about the effects of disease on societal values for both men and women. Zago says: “In the macrocosm of an epidemic disease such as the plague, men’s mental faculties are impaired to the point of subverting moral and social values.”<sup>130</sup> At the same time, however, it was commonly perceived that women’s sexual impulses were stronger than men’s, an opinion which seemed valid enough to justify the depiction of them in the *Decameron* as sexually immoral beings in a chaotic time.

According to Dionigi in his Introduction to Day One, the famine that hit Fano was so horrid because it reduced its slow-suffering victims to beggars. The word *mendicare* appears many times throughout this Introduction, especially in conjunction with the words *infamia* and *disonestà*. How awful it was, he laments, that mothers and fathers, in order to save their famished children, had to go out into the streets and beg for bread; how awful it was that “*quanti venerabili vecchi canuti*” (“how many venerable old men and women”), though they already suffered from old age, had to do the same. Suddenly, he changes his tone when he comes to his lamentation over the necessity for begging on the part of “*povere donne e miserabili Verginelle*”:

How many poor women, and miserable young Virgins, in defending themselves against hunger, which they combatted by killing their own

---

<sup>130</sup> Zago, “Women, Medicine, and the Law in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 66.

virginity, went begging and prostrating themselves in order to live honestly? And how many other unhappy women, married or not, not being able to sustain the act of gardening, and shaming themselves by begging, could not sustain the weight of infamy, and of sin, and did not find shame in selling their honest marriage and virginal honor to evil people for the cost of bread, and who attended these people with great study, and with infinite offense to divine Piety?<sup>131</sup>

The situation takes a turn for the worst as he continues, criticizing the mothers who have not only sold their own bodies for food, but have also entered their daughters into the same hardship:

How many dishonest Mothers, who, instead of dying of hunger alongside their daughters, were ministers to themselves, and lost their womanly honesty, lived in infamy and disgrace in plain sight of God and of men with manifest danger of dying an eternal death in the next century, as they were in this one, dead to honor and to decorum? How many [men] were there who, instead of suffering a little from hunger, not only posed dishonorable actions upon their wives, but similarly did so to their own daughters?<sup>132</sup>

After this diatribe, Dionigi decides to discuss no further these “malvage femine,” seeing that God will judge them harshly anyway, and he continues on with his description of the condition of Fano.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> “Quante povere donzelle, e miserabili Verginelle per farsi schermo contra la fame, che le combatteva per uccidere in loro la loro verginità, andavano mendiche procacciandosi con honestà il vivere? E quant’erano quell’altre infelici, così maritate come nò, che non potendo sostenere l’essercitio della zappa, e vergognandosi di mendicare poterono sostenere il peso dell’infamia, e del peccato, e non si vergognarono di vendere per prezzo di pane l’honestà maritale, e l’honor verginale à scelerate persone, ch’à quest’attendevano con molto studio, e con offesa infinita della divina Pietà?” (*DS I Intr.*).

<sup>132</sup> “Quante furono le dishoneste Madri, che più tosto, che morirsi con le figliuole di fame, furono per se stesse ministre, ch’elleno, perduta la donnesca honestà, vivessero infami, e vituperose nel cospetto di Dio, e de gli huomini con manifesto pericolo di morirsi d’eterna morte nel futuro secolo, com’erano in questo morte all’honore, & al decoro? Quanti furono coloro, che più tosto che soffrir’ un poco di fame, non pure le proprie mogli a dishonesti essercitij sottoposero, ma anche à dispetto loro il simil fecero delle proprie figliuole?” (*DS I Intr.*).

<sup>133</sup> “Ma perche mi vad’io ravigliando tanto in questa puzza, e in questo letame della dishonestà delle malvage femine, poi che i ministri dell’Altissimo di lontano m’accennano con mano, ch’io non taccia i loro patimenti, sofferti, non sò s’io mi dica dalla penuria, ò dall’agghiacciata carità ne i poco fedeli di

Jessica Levenstein comments on the plague in the *Decameron* as something that “cannot be controlled by any human act. Municipal ordinances ... do not prevent the spread of the disease; devout prayer brings no improvement to the suffering city [of Florence].”<sup>134</sup> The plague wipes out a majority of the citizens of Florence, but it also affects survivors, who, in the wake of the collapse of familial and governmental structures turn to anarchic and sexually “deviant” behavior, as described by Boccaccio in the Introduction. This deviant behavior and sad state of affairs in Florence is what the *brigata* purportedly hopes to escape by fleeing to the countryside. What Levenstein also suggests, however, is that this psychological and societal sickness was actually inescapable: it could not be stopped, mostly because it stemmed not from the horrific symptoms of the plague but from within the citizens themselves: “[The *brigata*’s] stories, with their insistent correspondence between passion and plague, suggest that the disease that the storytellers flee cannot be eluded. The force of law cannot stop it; the authority of familial bonds cannot check it; even the erection of physical barriers cannot prevent the course of passion ... what they flee is inside them and cannot be contained” (329). Furthermore, as Neil McTighe writes in his interpretation of the Valle delle Donne, the *brigata*’s escape from Florence might not be solely driven by the need to escape the city’s horrors, but rather fueled by “a desire to rediscover those ideal qualities of

---

Christo? Erano così estenuati, non dal digiuno ordinario solamente, ma dalla fame continua i poveri religiosi, che era una pietà troppo grande il vederli” [“But why do I go on and on about this stink, about this rubbish of the dishonesty of evil women, when the ministers of God from afar tell me that I do not stop talking about their hardships, sufferings, what else, their deprivation, or of the frozen charity of the less-than-faithful of Christ? The poor religious folk were so exhausted, not just from ordinary fasting, but of the continuous hunger that it was too big a pity to see them”] (*DS I* Intr.).

<sup>134</sup> Levenstein, “Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 313.

Florentine civilization that were no longer present in Florentine society due to the presence of the plague.”<sup>135</sup>

Similarly, Dionigi, through his *brigata* characters, lists the reasons for which the group should leave the city of Fano and venture out to a villa in the nearby countryside. Nicostrato—who is the Pampinea of the *DS brigata*—is the first to arrive in the church among his six friends (Chrisogono, Crisippo, Cirillo, Panfilo, Nicandro and Ugone), and is the first to reason out the need for the group to leave Fano. Considering that the citizens of Fano are now beyond the point of their help, he says:

And if it is thus, as it truly is, what are we doing here? What are we thinking, to what are we tending? Since we are negligent, and we do not seek to lighten anyone’s continuous suffering, what will all these miseries bring us to bear? Why don’t we do as many other fellow citizens have done, and retire to a villa for a few days, where we won’t hear so many pitiful screams, and we won’t see so many poor souls languishing from hunger and distress?<sup>136</sup>

Each of us, he continues, has a pulse: therefore, why not make the most of the situation and leave now that there is nothing more for us to do? Soon after the delivery of this speech the remaining three men (Teofilo, Teodoro and Gherardo) arrive and agree to join the original seven and to comply with their proposed daily laws and schedule. The ten men then depart, dreaming of the peace that they will finally find when birdsongs replace the screams and moans of their hungry, dying compatriots.

---

<sup>135</sup> McTighe, “Generating Feminine Discourse in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*: The ‘Valle delle Donne’ as Julia Kristeva’s *Chora*” 44n5.

<sup>136</sup> “E se così è, come verament’è, che facciamo noi qui? Che pensiamo, e che attendiamo? Perche semo negligenti, e non cerchiamo di dar qualche alleggiamento all’affanno continuo, che ci arrecano le tante miserie? Perche non facciamo noi come molt’altri de’ nostri Cittadini hanno fatto, e non ci ritiriamo per qualche giorno in Villa, dove per avventura tanti stridori compassionevoli non sentiremo, e tanti poverelli non vedremo languire dalla fame, e dal disagio?” (*DS I Intr.*).

### III. Introduction to the *Decamerone Spirituale*: Paratext

The title page of the *DS*, after re-naming it “Le diece spirituali giornate” and summarizing its contents, claims that this work is an “opera non men bella, ch’utile, e proffittevole per coloro, che Christianamente volendo vivere, desiderano di caminare per la via della salute” (“a work that is no less beautiful than it is useful, and beneficial to those who, wishing to live Christianly, desire to walk the road of health”). Aside from the initial repetition of the word *Decamerone*, nothing on the title page indicates that this work is modeled after Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. In fact, in the following pages of the work, there continues to be a marked absence of the name of Boccaccio. It is only when we reach the note from the printer (Giovanni Varisco) to the reader (which appears immediately after a four-page dedicatory letter written by Dionigi to “Sig. Girolamo Rusticucci, Cardinale Amplissimo, & Vicario generale di N.S.”) that we see Boccaccio’s name mentioned for the first time.<sup>137</sup> In this letter to the readers, Varisco outlines the five principal differences between Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and the present work by Dionigi, “nel quale si vede quanto siano conformi nell’inve[n]tione, e quanto discordi nelle materie trattate da loro” (“in which one sees how similar they are in invention, and how different they are in the material treated”).

The comparisons between the two works are the following: (1) Where Boccaccio writes about a plague in Florence, from which ten people flee to the countryside, Dionigi uses the occasion of a famine in Fano, from which ten “devote persone” escape to a villa outside the city. (2) In the first *giornata* of both *Decamérons*, neither author restricts the theme of the day (although for Dionigi’s *brigata*, the one condition is that the stories told

---

<sup>137</sup> Boccaccio’s name will appear as a source citation in the body of the text only twice, and will be written into the text only once, all of which I will mention later in this chapter.

must be not stories but *ragionamenti spirituali*). (3) In the second *giornata* of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Dioneo stakes claim on the last story of each day and the authority to tell stories based on "che materia gli piace;" likewise, and in the same day, Gherardo does the same in the *DS*.<sup>138</sup> (4) At the end of each *giornata*, a new king or queen is elected and a song sung among the company of Boccaccio's *brigata*; Dionigi's *brigata* likewise elects a new prince and sings a "canzone spirituale." Finally, (5) Having told stories for ten days (the verbs used by Varisco for storytelling are "favoleggiatosi" for the *Decameron* and "ragionatisi" for the *DS*), the respective *brigade* return to their hometowns and the book ends. Varisco, after listing these observations, compares the two authors' styles, saying:

One will see that, in terms of order and fabric [lit., weaving] there is hardly any difference between one *Decameron* and the other. Only where Boccaccio in his [*Decameron*] has told fables, obscenities, and worldly things in an erudite style; Dionigi in his new *Decamerone spirituale* with a mediocre, but clean speech, has told spiritual *ragionamenti* on diverse materials, and always with the authority, doctrine, and judgment of the [Church] fathers, of the Doctors, and of other great Authors, and often with the good examples of the Saints, having had as his principal object (for the honor of God, and for the well-being of his neighbors) to destroy vice, and introduce virtue.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> However, this seems to be the only parallel between Dioneo and Gherardo as *brigata* members and narrators.

<sup>139</sup> "Dove si vede, che quant'all'ordine, et alla tessitura non è quasi differenza di niente fra l'uno, et l'altro Decamerone. Solo dove il Boccaccio nel suo *con altezza di stile*, ha ragionato favole, lascivie, e cose mondane; il Dionigi nel nuovo suo Decamerone Spirituale *con mediocre, ma pulito parlare*, ha ragionato ragionamenti Spirituali sopra diverse materie, e sempre con l'autorità, con la dottrina, e con le sentenze de' Padri, dei Dottori, e d'altri Autor gravi, e con gli essempli bene spesso de' Santi, havendo havuto oggetto principalmente (per honor di Dio, e per salute del prossimo) di scacciare il vitio, e d'introdurre la virtù" (*DS*, n.p.; emphasis mine).



The printer then lists the theme for each *giornata*, specifying only for the first day the subject of each story, and ends the letter to the readers with an image of the Catholic cross.

With this paragraph, and with the information on the frontispiece (insisting that the work is “non men bella”), it seems as though Dionigi suffered from a sense of self-consciousness regarding any overt stylistic criticism of his work, especially in comparison to the other, considerably more famous, *Decameron*. Apart from two small references in the body of the text to works by Boccaccio (once to the *Corbaccio* and once to the *Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*), Dionigi does not mention the *Decameron*, whether in comparison to his work or in reference to the source of his macrotext, the *cornice*, and the structure of his *brigata*.<sup>140</sup> It is not clear whether Dionigi or Varisco composed the small paragraph on the title page to which I refer; either way, it and the letter from Varisco to the readers of the book indicate a strong need for reader approval on the part of the author. Given that this work is geared toward those who wish to “caminare per la via della salute” and live “Christianamente,” the fact that Dionigi’s style based on a “pulito parlare” (“clean speech”), despite its mediocrity, is helpful (“utile”) for the Christian reader: all essences of fable and the fabulous are excised from the Boccaccian text and replaced with “ragionamenti spirituali” that will prove useful on this spiritual journey, just as they did for the men in Dionigi’s *brigata*.

In the dedicatory letter from Dionigi to his patron, Cardinal Rusticucci (1537–87), Dionigi refers to his work as “questa mia picciola fatica” (“my little endeavor”)—almost certainly jokingly, considering the total content reaches almost 700 pages. The letter in

---

<sup>140</sup> Meanwhile, Petrarch is cited at least fourteen times throughout the 100 tales; Dante enjoys a considerable representation as well.

itself is hardly comprehensible and contains barely any useful information regarding the *Decamerone Spirituale*, as it is essentially three pages of praise heaped upon the Cardinal, thanking him for his patronage and dedicating the work fully to him. Given that Rusticucci was a close family friend to Dionigi, the praises are intimate and humble on Dionigi's part: Dionigi presents himself as a suppliant at the Cardinal's knees, addressing him and his house no fewer than ten times as "Illustriss[imo]" and "Reverendiss[imo]," kissing his hands and offering him his "most precious" work, which is only to be read by the Cardinal after he has carried out his most important tasks of the day. The tone of the letter is so humble that it borders on fearful: Dionigi makes several mentions of "arrabbiati invidiosi maldicenti" ("angry, envious gossips") and "morsi" (biting remarks) that he fears. Nevertheless, he has faith that his friend, the Cardinal, will accept his work whereas others will refuse it:

Seeing as how there is no bad tongue in the world that does not greatly fear the lashing and whipping of Princes; and that one does not so much content himself with biting one's tongue and quieting himself than criticizing those things that are sacred to the powerful, receiving nothing else but punishment for words, and for bad words, I mean. If for observation, or for servitude to it one decided to do this; there is no doubt, that he himself decided it with the best judgment. Since he paid this debt that he owed to his Signore, who received it in grace, one may believe that all who knew him held him dearly and in esteem.<sup>141</sup>

Although the *DS* does not feature an Author's Conclusion, the reader can find similarities in this dedicatory letter to Boccaccio's Conclusion to the *Decameron*. Dionigi mentions

---

<sup>141</sup> "Imperoche non è così mala lingua al mondo, che non tema grandemente la sferza, e il flagello de' Principi; e che più tosto non si contenti di troncarsi co' denti la lingua, e tacere, che biasimando quelle cose, ch'a grandi si consacrano, riceverne altro, che castigo di parole, e di male parole etiandio. Se per grande osservanza, o per servitù a ciò si risolse questo tale; non è dubbio, ch'egli medesimamente con ottimo giudicio si risolse. Peroche questi pagò quel debito, che doveva al suo Signore; e da lui ricevuto in gratia; si può credere, che fosse da tutti coloro, che lo conoscevano, molto riputato, e caro tenuto" (*DS*, n.p.).

the name Aristarco regarding his presumptuous literary critics, in reference to Aristarchus of Samothrace, a Greek grammarian.<sup>142</sup> He ends his letter reiterating his intent to represent spiritual recreation and bestowing gratitude and praise upon his benefactor.<sup>143</sup>

Directly following the remarks from Varisco is an index of all the authors and sources cited by Dionigi in the *DS*. This lengthy list is organized alphabetically and includes religious figures (including several saints, prophets, evangelists, popes, and Church doctors), authors from the Italian literary canon (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Poliziano, et al.), classical poets, orators and writers (Ovid, Seneca, Terence, Martial, Aristotle, Plutarch, et al.), and other miscellaneous historical sources and names, some of which I have not been able to identify. All citations throughout the work are listed in the margins, and since most are abbreviated due to limited marginal space, this index aids the reader in properly identifying the cited sources.

The final barrier between the paratext and the text itself is an illustration of the city of Fano, which, according to some sources, makes the work (and the city) notable and memorable (Figure 1).<sup>144</sup> The small rendering shows the city at the bottom, dense with churches and buildings but no people. Beyond the city is the countryside; the ten members of the *brigata* are seen in a bird's-eye view leaving the city as a group and

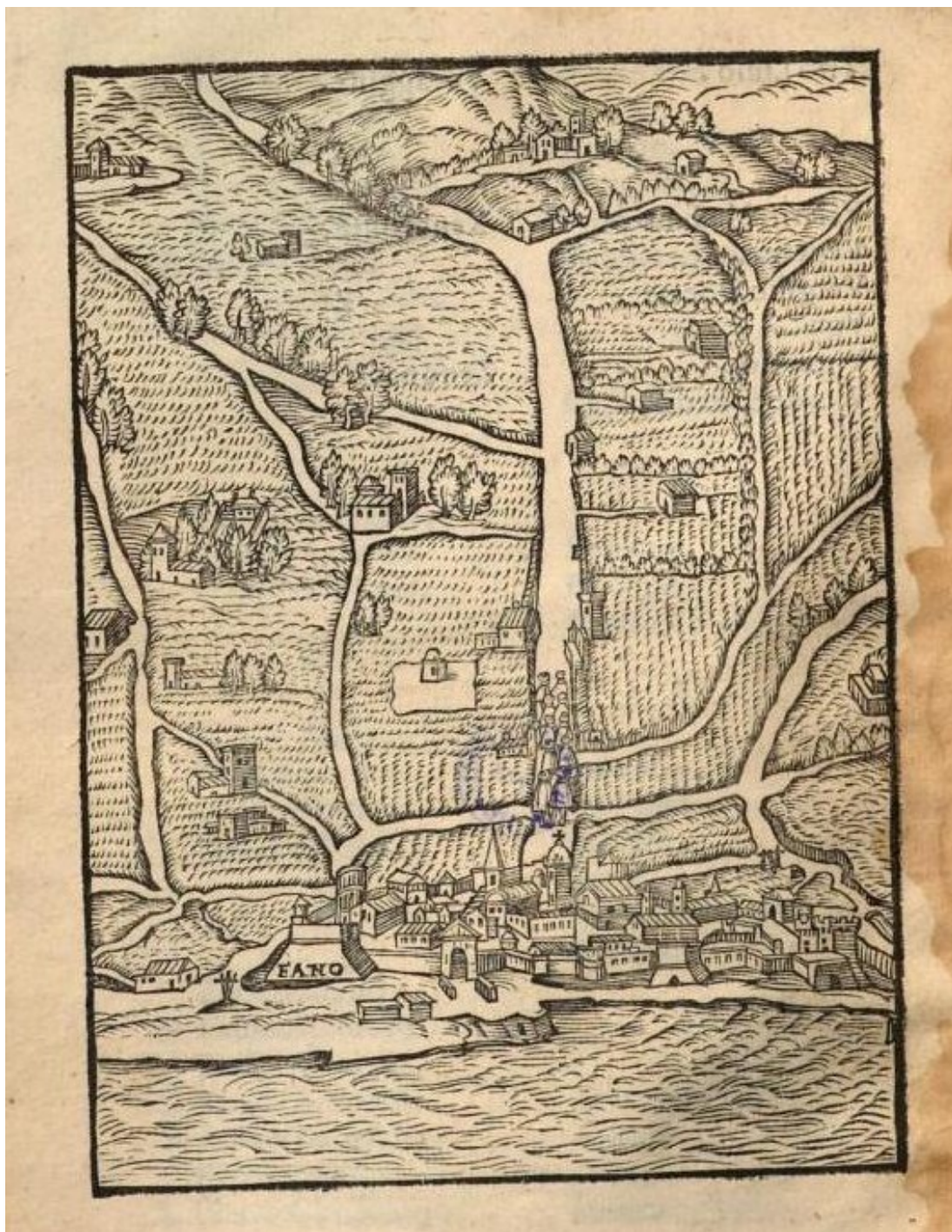
---

<sup>142</sup> “Percioche non pure faccio il mio dovere, ma anche m’assicuro, ch’alcuno non farà così ardito, à cui basti l’animo di mordere questo mio dono; massimamente essendo in lei, non pure l’autorità c’ho detto; ma anche il sapere, e la dottrina, con cui potrà di leggieri ribattere ogni temerità d’ogni prosuntuoso Aristarco.”

<sup>143</sup> “E quindi poi alcuna volta dopo gli affari, & i negotij importantissimi, che l’apportano il grado, e l’ufficio Illustriss. andar per ricreatione spirituale leggendo quelle cose che si è compiaciuto lo Spirito di Dio, che scriva il basso servitore di V. S. Illustriss. & Reverendiss. ch’io non mancando di pregar sempre il Signore, che le dia il colmo d’ogni commune desiderato contento, con ogni humiltà le bacio le sacre vesti, e desidero vera salute.”

<sup>144</sup> Longoni states that the *DS* is “tuttora ricordato anche perché contiene una delle prime vedute prospettiche della città di Fano e del suo circondario in cui la vicenda è ambientata” [“nowadays remembered also because it contains one of the first prospective views of the city of Fano and its surroundings in which the story takes place”] (221).

heading into the countryside (the reader sees only the backs of their heads; they are not identified by name). It is unclear from this picture which of the buildings in the sparsely-developed countryside is the villa used as the *brigata*'s residence during their sojourn; most of the parts of developed land seem to be farmland, and no buildings outside the city have a telltale steeple indicating that they are churches, despite the fact that in the Introductions to each of the Days the *brigata* members worship at a church before they begin their daily routine.



**Figure 1:** Frontispiece of the *DS*, showing the city of Fano

#### IV. Introduction to the *DS*, cont'd.: Macrotext

##### IV.1 Dionigi's *proemio*

The macrotext of the *DS* begins, fittingly, with the *proemio*, a short piece that copies almost verbatim the one featured in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. In some cases, the words of a Boccaccian sentence remain the same while the word order is jumbled slightly; in others, clauses are added for emphasis. On the whole, however, the length and general syntax of both proems correspond almost directly. In Dionigi's proem there are only four marginal citations: they belong, in order of appearance, to naming Dionigi's patron (Rusticucci); to book one of Ecclesiastes ("Eccles. cap. 1"); to a sermon given by Saint Bernard regarding Charity ("S. Bernardo sopra la Car. ser. 51"); and to chapter 18 of Saint Augustine's *Soliloquies* ("S. Agostino [s]olil. cap. 18").

Of the three parts of the *Decameron* where Boccaccio speaks in his own words, the proem is said to be the author's first line of defense (Cerisola 149). Since the macrotext is the most important link between Boccaccio and his readers, and since the proem is the part of the *DS* which mirrors Boccaccio's *Decameron* most closely, I will break the two proems into six corresponding passages and provide a brief, comparative *expliqué* for each part. Dionigi's text will appear first, followed by Boccaccio's.

##### *Part I*

D: CHRISTIANA cosa è il compatir' all'afflittioni de' miseri, e come che à ciascuno stia bene, à coloro è massimamente dicevole, li quali per qualche tempo hanno di conforto havuto mistieri, e l'hanno in altrui ritrovato; tra i quali s' alcuno ne fu mai bisognoso, e gli fu caro trovandolo, io, senza verun dubbio, son' uno di queglii.

B: Umana cosa è aver compassione degli afflitti: e come che a ciascuna persona stia bene, a coloro è massimamente richiesto li quali già hanno di conforto avuto mestiere e hannol trovato in alcuni; fra' quali, se alcuno

mai n'ebbe bisogno o gli fu caro o già ne ricevette piacere, io sono uno di quegli.

In this first matching block of text, Boccaccio stresses that compassion should be felt for the victims of the plague (or of love). Dionigi advises feeling pity for those afflicted by the famine, but categorizes them as “miseri” instead of “afflitti.” Dionigi adds the phrase “without any doubt” to the claim that he is indeed among one of the many sufferers.

## *Part II*

D: Percioche nell'età più bella della mia giovinezza fin'all'imbiancar delle tempie havendo con ardentissimo affetto di leale, e fedel servitore servito à un'integrissimo Prelato,<sup>145</sup> di tutte quelle rare virtù adornato, che ponno render'altrui riguardevole, & honorato; e quegli havendomi inaspettata morte da gli occhi della fronte rapito, solamente nell'intimo del cuore lassandomi più che mai viva la memoria di lui, mi fu di così acerba amaritudine cagione, che poscia molte volte mi sono meco stesso con istupore non picciolo maravigliato come possa essere stato, ch'io di cordoglio morto non sia. Ne alcuno si creda, ch'aspettato disegno di mondano interesse m'havesse à tanto dolore fatto soggetto; percioche à questo non attesi io giamai, ma solo della gratia d'amorevole, & virtuoso Signore i miei pensieri pagai. Onde menando io amarissima vita per la perdita di così virtuoso Padre, & alcune volte havendo non picciolo conforto preso da i piacevoli ragionamenti d'alcuno amico, che mi consolava, & in parte quell'intenso dolore menomato, che m'affliggeva, viva rimanendomi tuttavia nell'animo l'immagine Reverendissima di così degno Prelato; di leggieri mi sono avveduto, che nel disacerbar la mia pena, molto giovevoli stati mi sono gli amorevoli ragionamenti de gli amici, e i loro conforti altresì.

B: Per ciò che, dalla mia prima giovinezza infino a questo tempo oltre modo essendo acceso stato d'altissimo e nobile amore, forse più assai che alla mia bassa condizione non parrebbe, narrandolo, si richiedesse, quantunque appo coloro che discreti erano e alla cui notizia pervenne io ne fossi lodato e da molto più reputato, nondimeno mi fu egli di grandissima fatica a sofferire, certo non per crudeltà della donna amata, ma per soverchio fuoco nella mente concetto da poco regolato appetito: il quale,

---

<sup>145</sup> In the margin: “Monsignor Francesco Rusticucci Vescovo di Fano.”

per ciò che a niuno convenevole termine mi lasciava un tempo stare, più di noia che bisogno non m'era spesse volte sentir mi facea. Nella qual noia tanto refrigerio già mi porsero i piacevoli ragionamenti d'alcuno amico le sue laudevole consolazioni, che io porto fermissima opinione per quelle essere avvenuto che io non sia morto.

Here, Dionigi and Boccaccio both reference their youth: Dionigi adds the words “nell'età più bella” to characterize his, and emphasizes the fact that he is now old (he has “grown white at the temples”). The “altissimo e nobile amore” that Boccaccio feels taken by is replaced by Dionigi with an “ardentissimo affetto” and an unshakeable loyalty on the part of Dionigi for his patron, the honorable Francesco Rusticucci: Dionigi replaces worldly love felt for the female gender with a mentor-mentee relationship based solely on respect and loyalty, and adorned with “rare” virtues. Dionigi leaves out Boccaccio's admission of being of “bassa condizione.” It is the pain that Dionigi feels upon the recent death of Rusticucci that causes him to examine his own condition (compared to Boccaccio's being caused by the “crudeltà della donna amata”). There is no excess of desire for Dionigi that must be bridled, as there is for Boccaccio, only an alarming amount of bitterness and grief caused by the loss of his patron; however, this grief has not yet killed him. The friend that Boccaccio mentions is also present in Dionigi's text in the form of the image (memory) of his recently departed friend Rusticucci.

### *Part III*

D: E perche la Gratitude tra l'altre virtù non pure è degna di molta lode tra gli huomini, ma anche è molto gratiosa, & accettevole nel cospetto della Divina Pietà, percioche in lei si verifica il detto del Savio,<sup>146</sup> che dice, Ritornano nel luogo di dove uscirono, accioche di nuovo ricorranò i fiumi; & il suo contrario, cioè l'Ingratitude, è degna d'infinito biasmo, poi ch'ella è, come dice il devoto Bernardo,<sup>147</sup> Inimica dell'anima,

---

<sup>146</sup> Somewhere along this line there is a corresponding marginal note: “Eccles. cap. I.”

<sup>147</sup> In the margin: “S. Bernardo sopra la Car. ser. 51.”



vacuatrice de' meriti, dissipatrice delle virtù, consumatrice de' beni, perdimento de' beneficii, vento che abbruscia, e secca il fonte della pietà, la rugiada della misericordia, e i pieni fiumi della gratia, conforme à quel che disse Agostin santo una volta,<sup>148</sup> cioè, che l'Ingratitudine dispiace alla Divina Pietà, e ch'ella è la radice, e l'origine d'ogni male spirituale, e un certo vento, che secca, e che abbrucia ogni bene, che chiude, e serra sopra gli huomini il fonte della divina Misericordia, e da lei rinascono l'opere cattive già morte, e muoiono l'opere vive in tanto, che non si possono più riacquistare: ho meco stesso non pure proposto, ma risoluto affatto etiandio, di voler in quel poco, che le mie deboli forze potranno, in vece di ciò, ch'io ricevetti di conforto nel mio maggior bisogno, hora ch'in buona parte s'è menomato il dolore, e scemato l'affanno, se non à coloro, che mi consolarono, a' quali per avventura, ò per lo senno loro, ò per buona fortuna non fa mistieri, à quegli almeno, a' quali fa luogo per qualche lor noia, alcuno alloggiamento prestare. Et ancor che il mio alloggiamento, ò il mio conforto sia per essere a' bisognosi assai poco, e manchevole: nulladimeno mi pare quello, quantunque si sia per dover'essere, dove il bisogno maggiormente apparisce, più tosto porgere, che non darlo.

B: E per ciò che la gratitudine, secondo che io credo, trall'altre virtù è sommamente da commendare e il contrario da biasimare, per non parere ingrato ho meco stesso proposto di volere, in quel poco che per me si può, in cambio di ciò che io ricevetti, ora che libero dir mi posso, e se non a coloro che me atarono, alli quali per avventura per lo lor senno o per la loro buona ventura non abisogna, a quegli almeno a' quali fa luogo, alcuno alloggiamento prestare. E quantunque il mio sostentamento, o conforto che vogliam dire, possa essere e sia a' bisognosi assai poco, nondimeno parmi quello doversi più tosto porgere dove il bisogno apparisce maggiore, sí perché più utilità vi farà e sí ancora perché più vi fia caro avuto.

Dionigi initially begins with Boccaccio's discussion of gratitude, in which Boccaccio states that gratitude is the most commendable virtue and its contrary, worthy of condemnation. He then removes Boccaccio's phrase "secondo che io credo" ("according to what I believe"), putting more stake in Biblical text—he cites, for example, Ecclesiastes—and elaborates on the dichotomy between gratitude and ingratitude by

---

<sup>148</sup> "S. Agostino [s]olil. cap. 18."

adding in comments by Saints Bernard and Augustine. It is not surprising that the adjectives and nouns Dionigi uses to qualify *ingratitude* are feminine, since the word *ingratitude* is also feminine; however, his repeated vituperations drive the point home: Ingratitude is “*Enemy of the soul, emptier of merits, dissipator of virtues, consumer of goodness, [...] the dew of mercy*” and much worse, mostly according to Saint Bernard. After this digression, Dionigi returns to Boccaccio’s exact words, recalling that he had once received comfort when he was in need, and is now willing to return the favor.<sup>149</sup>

#### *Part IV*

D: E chi non loderà questo molto più alle devote Donne, che à gli huomini convenirsi donare? Esse, come quelle, à cui non è concesso dalla lor fragilità naturale di portar’ il peso de gli studii delle divine lettere, e molte volte l’è da’ Padri, e dalle Madri, da’ mariti, e da’ fratelli negato etiandio l’andar’ ad udire nelle pubbliche Chiese i sacri maestri della parola di Dio, la maggior parte del tempo ritirate, e solinghe nel picciolo circuito delle disagate camere loro, otiose dimorano. Onde assai volte occorre, ch’esse volendo, e non volendo, in un medesimo tempo varii pensieri per l’animo si rivolgono, i quali, come non è possibile, che sempre allegri sieno, così è impossibile, che sempre sieno delle cose del Cielo, e della lor salvezza. Ilche degli huomini devoti può avvenire, come scopertissimamente si può vedere.

B: E chi negherà questo, quantunque egli si sia, non molto più alle vaghe donne che agli uomini convenirsi donare? Esse dentro a’ delicati petti, temendo e vergognando, tengono l’amorose fiamme nascose, le quali quanto più di forza abbian che le palesi coloro il sanno che l’hanno provate: e oltre a ciò, ristrette da’ voleri, da’ piaceri, da’ comandamenti de’ padri, delle madri, de’ fratelli e de’ mariti, il più del tempo nel piccolo circuito delle loro camere racchiuse dimorano e quasi oziose sedendosi, volendo e non volendo in una medesima ora, seco rivolgendo diversi pensieri, li quali non è possibile che sempre sieno allegri. E se per quegli alcuna malinconia, mossa da focoso disio, sopravviene nelle lor menti, in quelle conviene che con grave noia si dimori, se da nuovi ragionamenti

---

<sup>149</sup> However, he uses the word *alloggiamento* (lodging, accommodation)—twice—instead of Boccaccio’s *alleggiamento* (easing).

non è rimossa: senza che elle sono molto men forti che gli uomini a sostenere; il che degli innamorati uomini non avviene, sí come noi possiamo apertamente vedere.

Boccaccio and Dionigi consider the weaknesses of the female sex, especially in regards to education, familial oppression, and the possibility of attaining happiness. However, Boccaccio's consideration is (supposedly) full of pity, while Dionigi's seems to be more of a distant, unfeeling observation. Dionigi delves more into the study of "divine letters," stating that women, due to their innate fragility, are unable to support such a heavy undertaking. Both authors state that women are shut up in their lonely bedrooms by their fathers, mothers, husbands and brothers; for Dionigi this is important because these women are thus unable to attend public churches to hear the sacred word of God and, even worse, for this very reason, cannot always attain salvation—at least, we assume, not the same kind that is available to church-going men.<sup>150</sup> For Boccaccio, the discourse falls on love and carnal desire; this is not present in Dionigi's text.

#### *Part V*

D: Percioche gli huomini essendo più forti alle fatiche de gli studii, e di loro stessi patroni, e signori, ponno più agevolmente, e senza contrasto veruno attendere, non solamente à gli studii delle Sacre carte, ma anche ponno, praticando con ogni dotto della legge di Dio, far molto profitto nella via dell'eterna salute. Da' quali modi può agevolmente ciascuno trarne molt'utile spirituale, e molta consolatione, almeno per buono spatio di tempo, se non per sempre.

B: Essi, se alcuna malinconia o gravezza di pensieri gli affligge, hanno molti modi da alleggiare o da passar quello, per ciò che a loro, volendo essi, non manca l'andare a torno, udire e veder molte cose, uccellare, cacciare, pescare, cavalcare, giucare o mercatare: de' quali modi ciascuno

---

<sup>150</sup> It is not clear from this passage whether the *brigata* is exclusively male by their own choice, by Dionigi's choice, or simply by happenstance (the fact that women were "not allowed in the church" would explain them not being present and available for the *brigata* to invite along).

ha forza di trarre, o in tutto o in parte, l'animo a sé e dal noioso pensiero rimuoverlo almeno per alcuno spazio di tempo, appresso il quale, con un modo o con altro, o consolazion sopravviene o diventa la noia minore.

Following his discourse on the frailty of women and the comparative strength of men, Dionigi gives more thought to religious study, leaving women out entirely. Men, he says, can be their own patrons and can guide themselves either in studying the “Sacre carte” or the “legge di Dio,” both of which stand to profit them greatly on their way to eternal salvation. For Boccaccio, the freedom provided to men (who are not stuck inside their rooms all day) lies more in daily activities such as hunting, fishing, playing or selling goods—no matter which one he chooses, man is nevertheless free from “noia” (boredom) and spared from spending too much time in vague thought or useless meditation.<sup>151</sup> No spiritual practice is mentioned by Boccaccio.

#### *Part VI*

D: Adunque, accioche da me in qualche picciola particella s'emendi il difetto della debolezza, e del mal uso nelle Donne; in soccorso, e à consolation delle devote (ch'all'altre è di soverchio il cinguettar della tale, e dell'altra tale) io intendo di raccontar loro cento spirituali ragionamenti sopra diverse nobilissime materie ragionati in diece giorni (come manifestamente si vedrà) da una devota brigata di diece religiose persone, nel tempo carestioso della passata fame fatta, & alcune spirituali canzonette da i detti devoti con multo gusto cantate per loro honesta ricreatione. Ne i quali spirituali ragionamenti, potranno le timorose di Dio molte cose utili apparare per la loro salute, oltre, che fuggiranno, spiritualmente occupandosi, il dannoso difetto dell'Otio, il quale è di molti mali cagione bene spesso, e di ruine. E credo, che le già dette Donne, che questi ragionamenti leggeranno, siano per ricevere ottimi consigli, sì per fuggire il male, come per operare il bene etiandio à loro spirituale contento, e diletto, e à molti giovevoli frutti raccogliere. Ilche s'avverrà, al Signore ne rendano gratie immortali, il quale non pur s'è

---

<sup>151</sup> Joseph Grossi notes: “In Boccaccio’s Proem, women are shown performing the acts that compose their own physical and psychological enclosure, while the men enact the hunting, seeing and so on that simultaneously constitute and confirm their freedom” (19).

degnato, liberandomi dal passato dolore, darmi ch'io habbia potuto attendere à ciò, ma anche quanto di buono sì è detto, tutto è venuto dall'abondevolissimo fonte della sua gratia.

B: Adunque, acciò che in parte per me s'amendi il peccato della fortuna, la quale dove meno era di forza, sí come noi nelle delicate donne veggiamo, quivi piú avara fu di sostegno, in soccorso e rifugio di quelle che amano, per ciò che all'altre è assai l'ago e 'l fuso e l'arcolaio, intendo di raccontare cento novelle, o favole o parabole o istorie che dire le vogliamo, raccontate in diece giorni da una onesta brigata di sette donne e di tre giovani nel pistelenzioso tempo della passata mortalità fatta, e alcune canzonette dalle predette donne cantate al lor diletto. Nelle quali novelle piacevoli e aspri casi d'amore e altri fortunati avvenimenti si vederanno così ne' moderni tempi avvenuti come negli antichi; delle quali le già dette donne, che queste leggeranno, parimente diletto delle sollazzevoli cose in quelle mostrate e utile consiglio potranno pigliare, in quanto potranno cognoscere quello che sia da fuggire e che sia similmente da seguitare: le quali cose senza passamento di noia non credo che possano intervenire. Il che se avviene, che voglia Idio che così sia, a Amore ne rendano grazie, il quale liberandomi da' suoi legami m'ha concesso il potere attendere a' lor piaceri.

In the final part of their proems, Boccaccio and Dionigi both set out to emend the problems they see afflicting the women of their time; however, the difference in word choice is telling of their respective attitudes. While Boccaccio sees the problem as a “peccato della fortuna” (“sin of fate”), Dionigi categorizes it as a “difetto della debolezza” (“defect of weakness”), pinning more blame on the weakness of women themselves rather than an oppression forced on them by fate. Boccaccio does acknowledge that the women are “delicate”—but not in the same way. Nevertheless, both propose “consoling” these disadvantaged women by means of storytelling. Both will recount one hundred stories (Dionigi’s are, of course, described as “spirituali ragionamenti”), designed to relieve their female audiences from what ails them (for Boccaccio, love; for Dionigi, all other, less earthly, afflictions). Dionigi replaces

“mortalità” with, simply, “fame” (hunger). He thus acknowledges that the famine is not necessarily one-hundred-percent deadly for every victim, as the plague almost always was, but was certainly also a devastating epidemic. Both present their macro-characters: Boccaccio has seven women and three men; Dionigi calls his ten men “dieci spirituali persone,” curiously erasing their gender entirely, and states that they will sing songs for their own “honesta ricreatione”—it will not be female characters singing for female readers, as in Boccaccio’s case, but rather male characters singing for themselves. In the stories, both say, there is useful material to be found for their respective audiences (Dionigi’s “timorose di Dio” and Boccaccio’s women; in the next sentence Dionigi also appeals to “le già dette donne”), which will provide information regarding which things are worth following and which must be avoided. The two men close their proems with recognition to their patrons (Boccaccio’s refers both to God and Amore, the god of love), and announce that their tales are about to begin.

#### **IV.2 The Introduction to Day One of the *DS***

Dionigi’s Introduction to the first Day of his *Decameron* is almost identical to Boccaccio’s in length, subject matter and syntax, with a few key differences. Dionigi spends roughly a page and a half copying Boccaccio’s words almost verbatim, then breaks off to make the description more particular to Fano and the famine. He describes how, when the famine reached its peak, the rich began to restrict their way of living and thus could not provide any alms for the poor and mendicants, to the point that “one could no longer see among the children of God any trace of Christian piety, or of Charity.”<sup>152</sup> While all tiers of society were affected by the epidemic, the poor suffered the most,

---

<sup>152</sup> “più non si vedeva tra i figliuoli di Dio vestigio alcuno di pietà christiana, ò di Carità.”

having to sell their houses and possessions (and even their own bodies) for pieces of bread for themselves and for their children; when parents could no longer provide for their children, they abandoned them.<sup>153</sup> The worst afflicted have reduced their diets to food usually fed to animals, as well as a few beans, legumes, roots and weeds.<sup>154</sup>

Dionigi paints those who were forced to sell their bodies as “disoneste”—a feminine word, because he is speaking mostly of women, or “miserabili Verginelle”—and describes this act of begging as “painful to witness,” despite all of his lauds to Dominicanism (a mendicant order, of which he was most likely part). However, he insists, this is “no ordinary fast.” Before introducing his *brigata*, he chastises the rich and the absent parents for not practicing acts of mercy and not doing for their own people and children what they would do for Christ, but instead treating them worse than the city’s dogs.<sup>155</sup>

Dionigi’s *brigata* members, who are described in the same terms and found in the same circumstances as Boccaccio’s, will be further analyzed in chapter 3 of this dissertation. The new *brigata* members, like Boccaccio’s, are all related somehow:

---

<sup>153</sup> “...i poveri fanciulli, da i propri padri, e dalle proprie madri loro abbandonati in braccio alla fame per non haver’eglino con cui nutricularli” (*DS I Intr.*)

<sup>154</sup> “...non pure le povere Religioni, ma il popolo minuto etiandio, e la tanta calamità; la quale era così grande, che quel che soleva esser cibo d’animali immondi, era cibo de gli huomini, e ve ne fosse pure stato. Ne pur le fave, e gli altri legumi si mescolavano per fame il pane, ma le radici dell’herbe, e la gramigna” (*DS I Intr.*).

<sup>155</sup> “Ah misera Povertà, ah derelitti poverelli, a che termine vi trovaste voi infelici, quando con tant’empietà foste, quasi cani, della Città scacciati? Ah che molto peggio fecero a voi, ch’a i cani non fecero. Percioche dove voi foste da gli hospitali, e da gli altri alberghi pij, e dalla Città medesima discacciati senza pietà, i cani nelle proprie case de i loro patroni a buone spese furono lasciati stare, se ben ci dice il Signore, che non è bene togliere a i figliuoli il pane, e darlo a i cani [quotes “S. Matt. c. 15.”]. Ma miseri non voi, ma coloro, che ne furono autori, e che v’acconsentirono. Che non a voi, ma al vostro capo Christo fu fatto quest’atto villano, quest’ingiuria, e questo male. Quello c’havete fatto a uno de’ miei minimi, t’havete fatto a me, dic’egli medesimo” (*DS I Intr.*).

“either by friendship, by proximity, or by family relations;”<sup>156</sup> they even match up directly to the members of the Boccaccian *brigata* (see Appendix B). The first seven men are all between the ages of 28 and 30 and are “each wise, noble of blood, and adorned in the best clothing.”<sup>157</sup> The same qualifiers apply to the remaining three, although they are younger (none is older than 20). Whereas Boccaccio decides to give his *brigata* members pseudonyms to protect their reputations, Dionigi does not, since the men are honest, spiritual members of the community; however, I have not found any hints as to their ‘true’ identities, that is, as actual people living in Fano at this time.<sup>158</sup> They have the same reasons for leaving their hometown and seeking respite in the countryside: they had no families to attend to in the first place, and there are no longer people to take care of either, given that the afflicted people of Fano are now beyond any help the men could possibly provide. After some deliberation, they jointly decide to travel to a “Palagio” in the hills, three miles outside of Fano, where comfort, wine, and seasonal fruits of all kinds are available.<sup>159</sup> There, they will engage in storytelling, meditation, and some recreation (the kind that will not offend anyone present). Each member of the *brigata* brings his own servant (“famigliare”), each of whom will perform a specific job (see Appendix B). When they narrate their stories, they will wear olive garlands, which represent peace and honor. Before embarking on their journey, Chrisogono sings a song for the group (not featured in the text), they pack their belongings, and begin on their way.

---

<sup>156</sup> “ò per amistà, ò per vicinanza, ò per parentado...”

<sup>157</sup> “...savio ciascuno, nobil di sangue, & ornato d’ottimi costumi.”

<sup>158</sup> “I nomi de’ quali, perciocche spirituali furono, come si vedrà, i loro ragionamenti, & honestissima fu la loro conversatione, in propria forma vi racconterò, & anche affinche, quello che ciascuno di loro dicesse, si possa senza confusione comprendere” (*DS I Intr.*).

<sup>159</sup> The Eremo Monte Giove.



### IV.3 Dionigi's Rubrics and Microtext

Much like the *rubriche* of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Dionigi's serve the purpose of providing the reader with a short summary of the upcoming *ragionamento* in one or two sentences. Given that each of Boccaccio's *novelle* tends to feature many more characters than Dionigi's, Boccaccio's rubrics are mostly longer and more detailed, while Dionigi's paint a short, general picture of the following *novella*. For instance, if one compares the rubrics of the very last *novella* (X.10) in each *Decameron*, it is immediately noticeable how vastly they differ:

D: Con molt'horrore, e con molto spavento, servendosi sempre dall'autorità della scrittura, e de i Dottori Ecclesiastici, si ragiona intorno all'universale Giudizio, che farà Giesu Christo nell'ultimo giorno del mondo.<sup>160</sup>

B: Il marchese di Sanluzzo da' prieghi de' suoi uomini costretto di pigliar moglie, per prenderla a suo modo piglia una figliuola d'un villano, della quale ha due figliuoli, li quali le fa veduto d'uccidergli; poi, mostrando lei essergli rincresciuta e avere altra moglie presa a casa faccendosi ritornare la propria figliuola come se sua moglie fosse, lei avendo in camiscia cacciata e a ogni cosa trovandola paziente, più cara che mai in casa tornatalasi, i suoi figliuoli grandi le mostra e come marchesana l'onora e fa onorare.

Despite the comparative lack of detail in Dionigi's rubric for his last, and seemingly most important, *novella*, the story occupies nineteen pages of the book and has the most dramatic effect on its listeners.<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, Boccaccio's rubric for (arguably) the most famous *novella* of the collection also proves to be quite vague in comparison to the

---

<sup>160</sup> "With much horror, and much fear, using as always the authority of the Scriptures and of the Ecclesiastic Doctors, one reasons on Universal Judgment that Christ will perform on the last day of the world."

<sup>161</sup> "Il quale havendo molto impaurito i giovani timorosi del Signore."

importance of the actual story, leaving out names and key events, a trait which Anthony Terrizzi observes in many of the other ninety-nine rubrics as well.<sup>162</sup> Dionigi's rubrics, for the most part, reference an idea or concept that fits into the day's overall theme; in the rare case that a name is mentioned, it is either the name of a saint, a biblical figure or Church father, or that of the Virgin Mary or Christ (see Appendix C).

The themes for each day of the *DS* are all spiritual in nature and, like the themes for each day of the *Decameron*, are carefully selected by the *brigata* member chosen to rule that day as Prince. They are the following:

Day #	Theme
1	(Open theme)
2	Humility
3	Solitude
4	Prayer
5	Poverty
6	Greed
7	Almsgiving
8	Tribulation
9	Patience
10	Beatitude

---

<sup>162</sup> See Anthony Terrizzi, "The Rubrics of the *Decameron*": "Many [*Decameron*] rubrics omit events which are of central importance to the novella ... While many of the rubrics do contain important structural features (such as symmetries and contrasts) which may provide keys to interpreting the proceeding novella, as a whole they tend to function autonomously, as an independent narrative layer which complements the others."

For the most part, these proposed themes are pleasing to the rest of the *brigata*, and in each case no one complains, even when they find the theme of “tribulatione” boring.<sup>163</sup>

If the *DS* is remarkable for the amount of plagiarism it shamelessly employs in its macrotext, the microtext is remarkable for entirely different reasons, one being its extreme lack of narrative substance, which makes the work as a whole barely readable, much less saleable. To be fair, this is why the one hundred components are called *ragionamenti* and not *novelle* or *favole* (the word that the printer uses to refer to Boccaccio’s stories); still, every *ragionamento* begins the same way—with the Prince of the day spending one sentence introducing his discussion—and then quickly devolves into a litany of quotes, either from the Bible or from philosophic or patristic works. Dionigi’s very last *ragionamento* (X.10) features no fewer than 47 marginal citations, most of which come from Saint Augustine, Saint John Chrysostom, the letters of Saint Paul, and the Gospel of Saint Matthew. The words that fill in the space between all these citations appear to be rote recitations from sermons or words and phrases from the Bible, if not whole poems (or just stanzas) of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Poliziano;<sup>164</sup> almost no part of the *DS* has the flavor of authenticity.

---

<sup>163</sup> “Parve ad alcuni, anzi che nò, noiosa la proposta del Prencipe, ma per non lassarlo mal sodisfatto di loro, v’acconsentirono, e insieme si disposero a ragionarne voluntieri, per non turbarlo” (*DS* VII Concl., p. 453).

<sup>164</sup> Citations of Dante are found in IV.10, p. 477 (*Purg.* II: “Da hoggi à noi la quotidiana manna, / Senza la qual per quest’aspro deserto / A retro v’è chi piu di gir s’affanna”), and in V.4, p. 302 (*Purg.* XX: “Maledetta sia tu antica Lupa, / Che più di tutte l’altre bestie hai preda / Con la tua fame senza fine cupa”). Petrarch is cited 14 times: once as “platonica Petrarca” (II.1, p. 94) and also as “Christiano Poeta” (II.9, p. 149); for pieces of various sonnets and *canzoni* (“canz. 38” and “sonnetto [*sic*] 222”, III.2, p. 168, “sonet. 270, 34, 230”, V.10, pp. 334-35; “son. 232” and “can. 25”, VI.2, p. 350; “son. 2”, IX.1, p. 516); and for the *Trionfi* (V.10, p. 335; VI.3, p. 352; IX.5, p. 542 and IX.8, p. 562) and “lib. senza titolo” (III.8, p. 197). A quote from Poliziano’s *Stanze* is found in III.9, p. 204. Finally, Ariosto is cited in III.10, p. 209 (“nel Canto”): “Non si vede hoggi, se non in iscritto.”

Aside from these citations and recitations, there are very few passages in the *DS* where Dionigi seems to be speaking directly to his readers. In one particularly long passage in the fourth *ragionamento* of Day Ten, Dionigi (via his narrator, Nicandro) rails against a multitude of ancient philosophers:

O miserable Epicurus, and o miserable and unhappy Christians who follow the stupid and harmful opinion of Epicurus, who not only do not find beatitude in the pleasures of the body, but also misery and eternal unhappiness amidst the flames and the woes of the abyss, in the company of serpents and infernal Demons. How much better would it be if they put their beatitude, not as Pythagoras did in the perfect science of numbers, but in the perfect knowledge of the holy trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; ... Not in the speculation of life, as Anaxagoras did, but in the speculation of the Divine Majesty, true blessed life, and heavenly things. Not in the science of things, as did Herilo, but in the science of God and his law ... Not in the sturdiness of men, as did [Aristotene], but in the omnipotent strength of God ... Not in the sufficiency of us and of earthly things, as did Hecataeus, but in that sufficiency of ours, as the Apostle [Paul] says, that comes from God. Not in the tranquility of this world, as did Timon, but in the tranquility of Heaven.<sup>165</sup>

While this passage is not particularly surprising in a “spiritual” work such as the *DS*, it does at least aid the reader in getting a glimpse of Dionigi’s ostensible beliefs and likely personality. One passage, seen in the sixth *ragionamento* of Day Eight (devoted to the theme of “tribulatione”) gives an even better glimpse into Dionigi’s feelings regarding

---

<sup>165</sup> “O misero Epicuro; & ò miseri, & infelici christiani, che d’Epicuro seguitano l’opinione sciocca, e dannevole in tanto, che non pur non trovano ne i piaceri del corpo la beatitudine loro, ma la miseria, e l’infelicità sempiterna nel mezzo delle fiamme, e de i cruciati d’abisso, in compagnia de i serpenti, e de i Demoni infernali. Quanto meglio saria, che ponessero la loro beatitudine, non come Pitagora, nella perfetta scienza de i numeri, ma nella perfetta cognitione delle tre persone divine Padre, Figliuolo, e Spirito Santo; ... Non nella speculatione della vita come Anassagora, ma nella speculatione della Divina Maestà, vera vita beata, e delle cose del Cielo. Non nella scienze delle cose come Herilo, ma nella scienza di Dio, e della sua legge ... Non nella gagliardia dell’uomo, come Aristotene, ma nella gagliardia onnipotente, e nella fortezza di Dio ... Non nella sufficienza nostra, e delle cose mondane, come Hecateo, ma in quella nostra sufficienza, come dice l’Apostolo, ch’è da Dio. Non nella tranquillità di questo mondo come Timone, ma nella tranquillità del Cielo” (*DS* X.4, p. 604); Dionigi/Nicandro also goes on to refute “Timone, Simonide, Zenone, Aristotile, [and] Theofrasto.”

Boccaccio, especially those regarding his own talents in comparison to the famous writer's:

O tribulations, o tribulations, of how many most noble effects are you the blessed occasioners? Why do I not have a thousand, or more, tongues of hard diamond, always untiring in lauding you, exalting you, and magnifying you? Why do I not possess the eloquence of that Arpinian [Cicero]; why don't I have the fluidity of the Greek Demosthenes, *of the Tuscan Boccaccio*, and finally, that of infinite others to speak of your miraculous effects, and your admirable, stupendous, and glorious operations?<sup>166</sup>

As mentioned before, though, this is only one of the three times that Boccaccio's name is mentioned in the microtext of the *DS*; the two others are citations taken from the *Elegy of Lady Fiammetta* and from the *Corbaccio*.<sup>167</sup>

#### IV.4 Introductions and Conclusions to *DS giornate*

Like the Introduction to Day One of the *DS*, the remaining nine Introductions (and ten Conclusions) echo the *Decameron* very closely, with a few exceptions. The most notable of these exceptions is the fact that Boccaccio's famous, lengthy Introduction to Day Four and the *Conclusione dell'autore* after the end of Day Ten are both absent in Dionigi,

---

<sup>166</sup> "O tribulationi, ò tribulationi, di quanti nobilissimi effetti siete voi beate cagionatrici? Perche non ho io mille, e più, lingue di diamante dure, & infaticabili per sempre lodarvi, essaltarvi, e magnificarvi? Perche non ho io l'eloquenza di quel d'Arpino; perche non ho la facondia del greco Demostene, *del toscano Boccaccio*, e finalmente, non ho quella d'infinit'altri per dire i vostr'effetti mirabili, e le vostr'operationi ammirabili, stupende e gloriose?" (*DS* VIII.6, p. 490; emphasis mine). Dionigi expands upon his frustrations concerning the use of the Tuscan language or the Fanese dialect in the *premissa* to his *Amor Cortese* (1570).

<sup>167</sup> The quote from *Fiammetta* appears in *DS* III.9, pp. 203-04: "O felice colui, che dimora nella villa solitaria, usando l'aperto Cielo dice Giovanni Boccacci" (in the margin: "Gio. Bocc. nella Fiam. lib. 9"; it should be Book 4). The reference to the *Corbaccio* is in II.8, p. 146: "L'humiltà santa è quella secondo Giovanni Boccacci, che ci fa conoscere l'altezza, la potenza, l'eterna stabilità, i continui benefitij della Divina Maestà verso noi; & appresso ci fa conoscere la nostra viltà, la nostra fragilità, e la nostra ingratitudine con l'infinite offese fatte verso colui, che ne i nostri bisogni, non risguardando al nostro malvagio operare, ci si mostra sempre pietoso, e liberale" (margin: "Gio. Bocc. nel. Labir."; *Laberinto d'Amore* is another name for the *Corbaccio*).

further diminishing the voice of the author and denying Dionigi a space in which he can further defend himself from possible detractors, as Boccaccio did. Dionigi's Introductions and Conclusions are fairly formulaic: each Introduction begins with a description of the sunrise, followed by the *brigata*'s early morning ritual of rising and then dispersing to do as each one pleases until it is time to attend mass at the nearby church. From there, the men pass the time leisurely until lunch, after which, around the time of the liturgical hour Nones (roughly 3:00 in the afternoon), they gather for storytelling, sitting in a circle with the Prince of the day in a position of slight elevation.

Most Introductions, in detailing the sunrise of the respective day, also mention the various songbirds that can be heard and which wake the men.<sup>168</sup> The morning of Day Four is announced by "La Rondinella peregrina" and "la sua dolente sorella Filomena" (216): the imagery of the swallow and the nightingale are quite significant, as I will expand upon in chapter four of this dissertation. In the Introduction to Day Six, a game of chess is played among members whose names are not revealed (nor are details of the game described). There is no dispute among the servants, as there is between Tindaro and Licisca in Day Six of the *Decameron*. In the Introduction to Day Seven, Chrisogono sings another song (bringing his total to three in the entirety of the *DS*); that song is detailed in the next section of this chapter.

The Conclusions to each day repeat the solemn rituals of Boccaccio's *brigata*—those of passing the crown to the subsequent Prince and choosing a theme for the next day—although it could be argued that these men practice the rituals much more seriously, thus reversing some of Boccaccio's parodic jabs at the clergy. While the passing of the

---

<sup>168</sup> For instance, the bird heard at the beginning of Day Two is "Pietro, l'uccello nuntio del giorno" (*DS* II Intr., p. 90).

olive crown is accompanied by snippets of conversation that mimic Boccaccio's, a few different descriptive elements are also thrown in: for example, that Cirillo has a head of "horamai canute chiome" ("already white hair", as compared to Fiammetta's "capo biondissimo" in the corresponding sentence). The words exchanged in the passing of the crown from Dioneo to Neifile in the *Decameron*, which makes Neifile blush, is echoed in the exchange between their counterparts, Gherardo and Chrisogono, wherein the latter, being "a man of much modesty and reservation," breaks out into a "resplendent vermilion" (Conclusion to Day Two). Otherwise, like the *DS* Introductions, the Conclusions are also formulaic: the *brigata* concludes their day of storytelling with an "Amen" and then passes the time until dinner by further deliberating on the themes of the *ragionamenti*, playing games, sleeping, praying, or wandering around the villa's grounds. At the end of Day Ten, the *brigata* members and their servants pack up their belongings, hear one last mass at the neighboring church, and simply return to Fano, right where they began.<sup>169</sup>

Given that the *DS* copies the structure and wording of the *Decameron* so much, it is surprising that Dionigi does not include his own authorial voice as commentary where Boccaccio inserted his: at the beginning of Day Four and at the Conclusion of the entire work. Many critics believe that these junctures, in addition to the proem and the Introduction to Day One, are where the relationship between Boccaccio and his readers is the strongest and most evident.<sup>170</sup> As Kristina Olson observes, "Without the Author's

---

<sup>169</sup> "E giunti nella Chiesa maggiore, di dove partiti s'erano, e rese le debite gratie al Signore; quando tempo lor parve, pigliando l'uno dall'altro amorevole commiato, tutti se ne tornarono alle lor Case."

<sup>170</sup> "I rapporti tra il Boccaccio e i suoi lettori, solitamente indiretti e lontani, mediati dai dieci novellatori cui egli affida, oltre alla narrazione delle novelle, anche l'esposizione delle proprie idee morali, religiose, sociali, artistiche, si fanno, nei tre momenti del Proemio, dell'Introduzione alla IV giornata e

voice at the beginning, the near-middle, and the end of the collection, the *Decameron* would feel ahistorical, and lose its relationship, however emblematic, with its imagined critical reader. The voice that is not explicitly Boccaccio's is still one that must accompany the *novelle* in their diffusion, in order to define their relationship to the emerging tradition as forged by Dante and the stilnovist poets upon their reception" (68). Dionigi's *Decameron*, ending abruptly after the hundredth tale, does not reach out to his readers or his critics; however, considering the subject of the ultimate *ragionamento* (the "horrifying" account of the Last Judgment, which shocks the *brigata*), he might have deemed this enough of a message for his intended audience. It is entirely possible that, by not including an *apologia* of sorts, as Boccaccio did in his Author's Conclusion, expecting his critics to pounce, that Dionigi sought to avoid opening a space for the same sort of criticism.<sup>171</sup>

#### IV.5 The *canzoni* of the *DS*

---

della Conclusione dell'autore, immediati, vivi, colloquiali" ["The relationships between Boccaccio and his readers, usually indirect and distanced, mediated by the ten storytellers to which he entrusts, other than the narration of the *novelle*, also the exposition of his own moral, religious, social, artistic ideas, are made, in the three moments of the Proemio, the Introduction to Day Four and the Conclusion of the Author, immediate, alive, colloquial"] (Cerisola 148).

<sup>171</sup> "Non può allora sorprendere lo scoprire che, nella Conclusione, i 'morditori' delle sue *novelle*, il Boccaccio non li individui più in persone estranee alla cerchia delle sue ideali lettrici, ma proprio fra le 'carissime' 'valorose' 'discrete' 'nobilissime' donne di quell'élite: ciò potrebbe anzi proporsi quale invitante occasione per chi, in vena di facili letture simboliche, volesse vedere raffigurato, in quell'avvenuta infiltrazione dello spirito critico nel cuore medesimo di quel consesso privilegiato cui le *novelle* erano state con tanto affetto destinate, il segno di un sostanziale fallimento dell'*apologia* boccaccesca" ["It is no longer surprising to discover that, in the Conclusion, Boccaccio does not identify the critics of his *novelle* as people outside the circle of his ideal female readers, but right among the 'dearest' 'valorous' 'discrete' 'noblest' women of that elite class: this could also be an inviting occasion for he who, in the vain of easy symbolical readings, wanted to see represented, in that infiltration of the critical spirit, in the same heart of that privileged assembly to whom the *novelle* were dedicated with much affection, the sign of a substantial failure of the Boccaccian *apologia*"] (Cerisola 151).



According to Dino Cervigni, the singing of songs by the Boccaccian *brigata* constitutes “each evening’s most important moment.”<sup>172</sup> The *canzoni* featured at the end of each *giornata* of the *DS* may be the only parts of the work to feature Dionigi’s own, unplagiarized words, but the originality ends there. Each song corresponds exactly in structure (for the number of lines in each stanza and overall), rhyme scheme, and (more or less) in meter to those featured in the *Decameron*. Where Boccaccio’s ten ballads “constitute the lyrical, personal, subjective *locus* par excellence in which the ten young people express their passions about love,”<sup>173</sup> Dionigi’s *canzoni* are extremely impersonal and read like biblical psalms; however, I have not been able to identify the exact source of any, as none corresponds entirely to a specific psalm or Bible passage. There is no dancing to accompany the music of Nicostrato’s zither. Unlike Boccaccio’s *canzoni*, which do not relate to the day’s theme, the songs performed in the *DS* expand upon the theme of the day. Between Boccaccio’s and Dionigi’s *canzoni* there are no similarities, with one exception in the first day’s *canzone*, in which Dionigi repeats the terms *bellezza* and *vaghezza* one line after the other—these words are sung in the first three lines of Emilia’s song, also in the first day.

The first song of the *DS* is sung by Ugone. Ugone is Emilia’s direct counterpart in the *DS* and shares her numerology regarding narration; thus it is not surprising that he is the first among the *DS brigata* to sing a song at the end of the day. Ugone’s song is the following:

Tu che scendesti, ò sempiterno Amore  
Ne i cuor de’ tuoi fedeli,

---

<sup>172</sup> Cervigni, “The *Decameron*’s Ballads and Emilia’s Happy Song” 131.

<sup>173</sup> Cervigni, “The *Decameron*’s Ballads” 143-44.

E gli accendesti di celest' ardore;  
 Scendi, ti priego, in noi, reggi, e governa  
 I cor, le lingue, e l'opere à grandezza  
 De l'alta, immensa Maestade eterna,  
 Che ci ha adornati di tanta bellezza,  
 Che fa che non curiam d'altra vaghezza.  
 Pur ti semo fedeli,  
 E pur bramiamo il tuo superno ardore  
 Eterna Carità, ch'inamorasti  
 De le cose del Cielo i petti humani,  
 Deh dona a noi santi pensieri, e casti,  
 Da l'amor di qua giù fatti lontani.  
 Fa sant' Amor, che i desir nostr'insani  
 Sian fatti a te fedeli,  
 E sian'accesi del tuo Santo ardore.  
 Che se la fiamma del tuo puro fuoco  
 Illustrerà le nostre oscure menti,  
 Non pur ti loderemo in ogni luoco,  
 Ma anco del tuo amor lieti, e contenti,  
 Spregiando il mondo, e le cose presenti,  
 Contemplerem fedeli  
 Quanto fia grande il tuo possente Ardore.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> DS I Concl. See Appendix A for all of Dionigi's *canzoni* and their translations.

The most immediate observation is that, as stated before, the song employs the same rhyme scheme, meter, and number of lines as Emilia's song. Both have 24 lines, split into an initial tercet, followed by three septets. Also in both songs, the last word of the first tercet is the one repeated at the end of each septet; however, this is where the similarities end.

As Dino Cervigni notes in his analyses of the *Decameron* ballads, the songs serve a specific purpose in the *cornice* of the *Decameron* as a whole, and also in the framing of each Day.<sup>175</sup> Even if the songs do not feature an explicitly religious theme, they constitute a serious ritual in which the whole *brigata* partakes. Since, per Cervigni, this action might also be a parody of monastic rituals on Boccaccio's part,<sup>176</sup> it can be assumed that Dionigi sought to "fix" Boccaccio's error by making his *canzoni* much more spiritual, rendering the ritual that much more solemn and important for his *brigata*.

As mentioned before, all Introductions and Conclusions of the *DS* more or less mimic the *Decameron*'s exactly, sometimes only with a few words changed or rearranged. However, the Introduction to Day Seven of the *DS* features an extra *canzone*, sung by Chrisogono. Like the ten other *canzoni* featured in the *DS*, its exact origins are a mystery, but as a poetic device it treats three of the instruments of the Passion of Christ, or the *Arma Christi*: the crown of thorns ("quelle spine"), the nails used to crucify Christ ("quei chiodi"), and the Holy Cross ("quella Croce"). The song is twelve lines long and has a rhyme scheme of ABBA / CDDC / EE / AA:

Quelle spine, quei chiodi, e quella Croce

Giesù, che con crudel'empio martire

---

<sup>175</sup> See Cervigni, "The *Decameron*'s Ballads" and "Fiammetta's Song of Jealousy: Are the Young People Still at Play?"

<sup>176</sup> Cervigni, "The *Decameron*'s Ballads" 140n22.

T'hanno fatto morire  
Son'i nostri pensier, l'opre, e la voce.  
Signor, quei t'han confitto  
Nel durissimo legno,  
Dove con duol indegno  
T'ha il sommo Padre stesso derelitto.  
Siano un fascio di mirra queste cose  
Ne' nostri cor'ascose;  
E cangino i pensier, l'opre, e la voce  
Le tue spine, i tuoi chiodi, e la tua Croce.

The reason for which this “ballatetta” is included in the Introduction to a Day of storytelling instead of at the Conclusion of the Day is not terribly mysterious: it is in the beginning of this day of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* that the *brigata* travels to the Valle delle Donne, starting their trek at the break of dawn and arriving just in time for their midday meal. Since Dionigi’s *brigata* has no such destination at which to arrive, they have no activity with which to pass the corresponding time between their morning mass and lunchtime, so they opt to sing.<sup>177</sup> Chrisogono’s song is said to please the “religiosa brigata” so much that he sings more songs at their requests until the group’s *siniscalco* sets the table for lunch.

## V. Conclusion

---

<sup>177</sup> “vedendo il Prencipe [Gherardo], che l’hora del desinare non era ancora venuta, e il Sole poco alto, ordinò, che Crisogono sopra la Cetra di Nicostrato alcuna cosa, che devota fosse, cantasse” (*DS VII* Intr.).

Despite all of this analysis, there is still much to uncover in the *DS*. From the dedicatory letter to Cardinal Rusticucci, we know that Dionigi's main objective was to create a 'purified' *Decameron* that would be suitable for more religious-minded readers. In creating this work, however, Dionigi perhaps failed to consider that Boccaccio's work was already quite moral and 'useful,' despite its many episodes of bawdiness and anticlericalism.<sup>178</sup> Dionigi's all-male *brigata*, as we will see in the following chapter, leaves the city without the company of women (in fact, they bring ten additional men with them as servants); in doing so, they align themselves with Dionigi's claims throughout the text and paratext that the company of women will do nothing but distract them from their spiritual sojourn. As I will show, this absence does not clear the 'woman problem' from the texts: the *brigata*'s *ragionamenti* are still infused with misogynistic material, which raises questions about the actual spirituality and purity of the group and its intentions.

---

<sup>178</sup> Joan Ferrante writes: "Though [Boccaccio's goal] seems to be limited to virtue on earth, still the purification of the soul, the fashioning of the good man, accords with Boccaccio's presentation. His ideal man is one in whom love and reason are properly balanced [i.e. Panfilo as conglomeration of Dioneo and Filostrato]" (Ferrante, "The Frame Characters of the *Decameron*" 215). Joy Potter adds: "Fifty-five of the hundred stories [of the *Decameron*] are introduced as having some sort of moral aim by their narrators, and the adjective 'useful' is used again and again" (Potter, *Five Frames for the Decameron* 34).

## Chapter Three:

### Spiritual Masculinities: Boccaccio's *brigata* vs. Dionigi's

#### I. Introduction

Of the many differences between Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Dionigi da Fano's *Decamerone Spirituale*, the most superficially apparent one is the composition of each *brigata*. The Boccaccian *brigata*, treated by numerous critics over many years, serves a distinct function in the frame narrative and body text of the *Decameron*, wherein each member contributes something that is both distinctive in the micro- and macrotext and specific to his or her personal characterization. While the numerology of both *brigata* is the same—ten youths, almost all in their 20s—the Boccaccian one comprises seven females and three males, whereas Dionigi's consists only of males. Interestingly, although the names of most of the *brigata* members in Dionigi's *Decameron* are changed to reflect either saintly or philosophical origins, the one name that remains the same between the two *brigata* is Panfilo, who in Boccaccio's *brigata* represents Platonic Reason and, true to his name, bears an “all-loving” nature.<sup>179</sup> Later in this chapter, after a comparison of both *brigata*, I will examine Boccaccio's and Dionigi's Panfilos alongside one another to explore where they differ and where they appear to serve the same function, whether onomastically, numerologically, or functionally within their respective *brigata*.<sup>180</sup>

Although a significant amount of work has already been done on the original *brigata* members within these three contexts, comparing Dionigi's *brigata* to Boccaccio's

---

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, Victoria Kirkham, *The Sign of Reason in Boccaccio's Fiction*, and Michael Sherberg, *The Governance of Friendship: Law and Gender in the Decameron*.

<sup>180</sup> Also worth noting is the fact that Panfilo's counterpart in the *DS* is Teofilo, a significant name change which I will also treat later in this chapter.

will reveal intrinsic problems in gender dynamics and individuality within the newer *brigata*—speaking also to the identity of the author—as well as the negative consequences of Dionigi’s removal of female narrators from his *Decameron*. There are very few critical responses, contemporary or modern, to the *DS* regarding the replacement of the mixed Boccaccian *brigata* with an all-male one. Given that the general consensus of the work as a whole is that Dionigi’s efforts were in vain, I believe that much of the disdain directed toward the *DS*, aside from other problems, was caused by the removal of females from the Boccaccian *brigata*, where they served as distinctive individuals who were able to mediate each other’s speech by responding, sometimes combatively, to the males’ more licentious tales and suggestions. Dionigi remedies this absence by also removing Boccaccio’s licentious subject matter, however, there is still an ample amount of ambiguously misogynistic material in his *ragionamenti*. Overall, his *brigata* and his work as a whole are irreparably damaged by the deliberate dismissal of women.

## **II. Boccaccio’s *brigata***

### **II.1 Numerology**

The numerology of Boccaccio’s *brigata* is simple, but far from accidental. As scholars such as Victoria Kirkham and Franco Fido have shown, Boccaccio frequently employed the numbers 3, 7 and 10—numbers and couplings which Saint Augustine also found compelling. Kirkham writes: “The perfect 10 of the Decalogue is best understood as a sum of 3 + 7, he believed, because in those integers we recognize the Creator’s Trinity plus the hebdomad of the created universe, that is, the week of Creation in Genesis” (*The*

*Sign of Reason* 147).<sup>181</sup> These numbers refer to the three men and the seven women who comprise the Boccaccian *brigata*. Dionigi opted to retain the perfect number ten in his *brigata* to reflect this choice and keep the storytelling cohesive and balanced. Nonetheless, Dionigi's *Decameron* also begins with seven men in a church who later meet three others who join them on their journey.

Besides dividing the Boccaccian *brigata* into two groups of seven and three, some critics further divide the seven women into two more groups: a group of four (Pampinea, Filomena, Fiammetta and Lauretta) who stand for the cardinal virtues, and a group of three (Neifile, Elissa and Emilia) who embody the theological virtues. The men round out the group of ten, adding other significant attributes (i.e. Irascibility, Lust, and Reason).<sup>182</sup> Kirkham also notes: "Others before have identified the narrators in the *Decameron* with virtues. No scheme so far has proven persuasive, however, in part because the interpretations proposed disregard Boccaccio's division of storytellers into seven and three. The numbers are clearly not arbitrary since they operate at other levels in the text" ("An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*" 7). Although such accounts differ in respect to others, the delineation between, and grouping of, the members of this *brigata* is clear and useful in distinguishing them as individualized narratorial figures.<sup>183</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> The source is Augustine's *Confessions* (III, 8): "vivitur male adversus tria et septem, psalterium decem chordarum, decalogum tuum, deus altissime et dulcissime."

<sup>182</sup> Kirkham points to Plato's *Republic* (Book IV) and also his *Timaeus* for more info regarding the names of the male *brigata* members and their corresponding divisions of the soul (i.e. Reason, Anger, Lust or Appetite).

<sup>183</sup> Kirkham, *The Sign of Reason* 19n1: "The women are seven to suggest a perfect cycle (cf. days of the week, planets, Virtues, Liberal Arts); 'le nuove Muse ispiratrici di poesia,' they are rhetorically inspired emblems of universal literary themes—fortune, intelligence, love, virtue. The men likewise have names with etymologies that signal their literary provenance, although to a certain extent they are the author's doubles." This is not the first time Boccaccio plays with groupings of characters, especially of women: we see a similar grouping in his *Ameto* (*Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*), in which different nymphs represent different virtues, such as temperance, charity, hope, etc., and also in the *Filocolo*.



## II.2 Onomastics

Some of the most significant scholarship regarding the onomastics of Boccaccio's *brigata* has been done by Kirkham, Sherberg, Luigi Sasso, Teodolinda Barolini, Joan Ferrante, and Giuseppe Mazzotta, among others.<sup>184</sup> Boccaccio says in his Introduction that the 'true names' of the *brigata* members are withheld and are replaced by pseudonyms; however, even as pseudonyms, the names reveal much about their bearers, as well as about Boccaccio.<sup>185</sup> Not one of the ten names is random: each appears in prior literary works, mostly written by Boccaccio himself but also by Petrarch, Virgil and Ovid.<sup>186</sup> Since the onomastics of the Boccaccian *brigata* is already well documented I will not spend much time on it here, save to compare to the names and characteristics of Dionigi's *brigata*. We will notice some similar traits between the corresponding members

---

<sup>184</sup> See Kirkham, "An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*" and *The Sign of Reason*; Sherberg, *The Governance of Friendship*; Sasso, "L'interpretatio nominis in Boccaccio"; Barolini, "Sociology of the *Brigata*: Gendered Groups in Dante, Forese, Folgore, Boccaccio—From 'Guido, i' vorrei' to Griselda"; Ferrante, "The Frame Characters of the *Decameron*: A Progression of Virtues"; and Mazzotta, "The *Decameron*: The Literal and the Allegorical." For a more mathematical approach to narratorial patterns of the *Decameron*, see chapter 2 of Franco Fido's *Il regime delle simmetrie imperfette: Studi sul 'Decameron'* ("I piani narrativi nel *Decameron* e le novelle interne").

<sup>185</sup> "Il Boccaccio cioè intende dare ai personaggi della brigata nomi significativi e rivelatori del carattere e delle qualità che ogni novellatore assumerà nel corso delle dieci giornate. L'organizzazione dei temi e delle novelle si troverà in tal modo rispecchiata nei nomi stessi dei dieci giovani secondo una programmatica e razionale distribuzione" ["Boccaccio thus intends to give to the characters of the *brigata* names that are significant and revealing of their nature and of the qualities that every storyteller will assume in the course of the ten days. The organization of the themes and of the *novelle* one will find mirrored in the same names of the ten youths according to a programmatic and rational distribution"] (Sasso 156).

<sup>186</sup> Pampinea appears in Boccaccio's *Ameto* and *Bucolicum Carmen*. Filomena is the dedicatee of the *Filostrato* (another name in the *brigata*) and is the name of an Ovidian character in the *Metamorphoses* (Philomela) who is muted when her tongue is ripped out. Fiammetta is a character in the *Filocolo*, *Ameto*, and *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* (and in the last one, her lover is Panfilo). Fiammetta is also reputed to be the name of Boccaccio's lover in real life. Elissa is an Italian variant on the name Dido, who figures strongly in Virgil's *Aeneid* (however, for all of the female mythological references in the *DS*, Dido is not one of them). Lauretta, a diminutive of Laura, is seen in the vast majority of Petrarch's poetry; finally, Emilia is also seen in the *Ameto* and *Teseida delle nozze di Emilia*. Dioneo does not appear in other Boccaccian works.

of the two *brigade*: namely, Pampinea's and Nicostrato's shared vigorous propensities toward leadership and organization of the group, as well as Dioneo's and Gherardo's stubborn nonconformism to the daily rules. As previously mentioned, the first four women of the Boccaccian *brigata* represent the four cardinal virtues: Pampinea, Prudence; Filomena, Fortitude; Fiammetta, Temperance; and Lauretta, Justice. The other three women (Neifile, Elissa, and Emilia) stand for, respectively, Charity, Hope, and Faith.<sup>187</sup> The three men (Filostrato, Dioneo, and Panfilo) represent irascibility, concupiscence, and reason, respectively.

It is difficult to say whether all ten of Dionigi's *brigata* members correspond exactly to the above virtues. Being men of "spiritual" nature, they are all invested in representing the cardinal and theological virtues both in their lives and in their *ragionamenti*; however, the macrotext of the *DS* does not afford enough detail to link them definitively to these traits. Some critics have also aligned Boccaccio's *brigata* members (e.g. Neifile and Elissa) to political (i.e. Ghibelline) tendencies based on the stories that they tell;<sup>188</sup> this information is also unavailable in the *DS* since there is no narrative but instead, a superabundance of biblical quotes and historical exempla.

The fact that almost half of the Boccaccian *brigata* members bear names that refer etymologically to love is another distancing factor from the onomastics of Dionigi's

---

<sup>187</sup> Although various scholars mention these distinctions, Ferrante has suggested that Elissa can also represent justice (Ferrante, "The Frame Characters of the *Decameron*").

<sup>188</sup> For Neifile: "Neifile seems to represent a certain Ghibelline sensibility within the *brigata*, regularly favoring authority figures (fathers, guardians, masters, *podestà*, kings and so on). This attitude is reflected as well in her perspective on the duty to respect one's ruler or superior (sons, daughters, servants, wives, knights, et al.) in particular and to revere the ordered and established societal institutions and traditions (hierarchy of power in family, clan and country) in general." For Elissa: "It has been said that Elissa represents either 'hope' (Kirkham) or 'justice' (Ferrante) and also that she is very young and dominated by a violent passion. [Michael] Paden suggests that she is the sole recognizable Ghibelline of the group." Both quotes found on DecameronWeb; see Paden, "Elissa: La Ghibellina del *Decameron*," and Ferrante, "The Frame Characters of the *Decameron*."

*brigata*. Four members' names (Filomena, Neifile, Filostrato, Panfilo) include the etymon *fil* and reference various forms of love, from being loved, to being newly in love, to being oppressed or beaten by love, to all-loving.<sup>189</sup> In the *DS* this number is reduced to only two, retaining Panfilo and adding Teofilo ("friend of God"), and the reader may assume that these two have directed their love toward more spiritual ends. The Introduction to Day One of the *DS* makes no mention of the *brigata* members having wives, lovers, or even families; since they are described as spiritual men, the reader may assume that they are celibate.

### II.3 Functionality

The function of the Boccaccian *brigata* during their two weeks of travelling and storytelling is mostly a collaborative one. As each member narrates his or her tales, the other nine listen and provide critical feedback and opinions. The relationships between the ten members are positive; there is no ill will among them and they do not face any hardships on their journey. Marcel Janssens discusses their functionality in the following quote:

One could demonstrate [the *brigata*'s] didactic purpose with a long series of verbs illustrating the persuasive function of the story-telling. They just intend to teach, to demonstrate, to show, to prove, to impress somebody, to preach, to give excellent examples, to illustrate the truth of their assertion, to advise, to suggest ... Neither do the secondary narrators neglect the second aim of the 'author': pleasure, amusement. Pampinea declares right from the beginning: 'festevolmente viver si vuole, né altra cagione dalle tristizie ci ha fatto fuggire.'<sup>190</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> The definition of Filostrato's name as "defeated by love" is now widely refuted and has been replaced by some as "amante della guerra," or "lover of war" (see Sasso 156).

<sup>190</sup> Janssens, "The Internal Reception of the Stories within the *Decameron*" 138-39.

Even when there is disagreement among the *brigata* members, it is done light-heartedly, not maliciously—one recalls, for example, Elissa’s rebuke of Dioneo in the Conclusion to Day Five when he proposes singing a *canzone* with lascivious content.

Some scholars link the *brigata*’s organization to a sort of miniature, self-governing society that functions hierarchically and also religiously. Dino Cervigni observes that the notion of authority within this group derives from democratic principles (that is, their authority comes from the members themselves, not from God) and is “secular by nature;” however, he also notes that the ways in which the group holds elections each evening is similar (in a parodic sense) to the election methods used by abbots and abbesses in medieval monasteries and convents.<sup>191</sup>

#### **II.4 Individuality and Gender Dynamics**

While differentiation in character traits of the ten individual Boccaccian *brigata* members is not always salient, their individuality is of emphatic importance in the work as a whole. Because of this, scholars have analyzed each *brigata* member’s ten stories for indicators of their individual personalities, since Boccaccio does not provide substantial background information to the reader either in his main Introduction or in the Introductions and Conclusions to each Day. Scholarship on this aspect of the *Decameron*, for the most part, seeks to identify and distinguish the *brigata* members from each other, whether by the political tone of the stories they tell, by comparison of the narrator to his or her

---

<sup>191</sup> “The election occurring every evening has been likened to that of the Florentine priors, who all belonged to guilds ... I also suggest another, much broader, connection, which is played out parodically: relating the election of the seven queens and three kings to the elections of abbots and abbesses, taking place in monasteries and convents, and also, by extension, to the establishment of authority in medieval times, ultimately referred to the Christian Godhead” (Cervigni, “The *Decameron*’s Ballads and Emilia’s Happy Song” 133-34n5).

characters, or by the songs that they sing.<sup>192</sup> Regardless of these distinguishing factors, however, the *brigata* members are only seen as individuals *within* this group: they are never (within the bounds of the *Decameron*, at least) seen as real, living members of Florentine society. Despite their delineated, important roles in this small society, and despite Boccaccio's indication that they are indeed real people, they only truly exist in literature. We know nothing about their existence, neither prior to the formation nor after the dissolution of the group.

Surprisingly, for all of the scholarship that exists on gender dynamics in the *Decameron* (specifically within the *brigata*), there is hardly any focus on the extreme rarity of the combination of genders in the *brigata*, let alone in any *brigata* seen in this time and place in history, literary or not. As Teodolinda Barolini notes, "The mixed-gender *brigata* of the *Decameron* frame story is a veritable impossibility" ("Sociology of the *Brigata*" 5). While Barolini refers here mainly to *brigata* seen in Italian literature at this time (for example, in specific works of Dante, Forese Donati, Folgore da San Gimignano, and of course Boccaccio), she also points out that mixed-gender groups in Italian society in the Trecento were also a rarity, mostly due to strict societal expectations placed on women and chastity. Richard Kuhns elaborates: "One of the conflicts in human life that [the Boccaccian *brigata*] must come to understand is the great range of sexual compatibility and incompatibility that men and women experience. With each other, the men and women have been chaste, careful not to be flirtatious, and open to frank discussions of sexuality without succumbing to lustful behavior. And for the most part the sexual conflicts recounted in the narrative tellings have been resolved with humor and

---

<sup>192</sup> See for example Cerisola, "La questione della cornice del *Decameron*"; Cervigni, "The *Decameron*'s Ballads and Emilia's Happy Song"; Idem, "Fiammetta's Song of Jealousy: Are the Young People Still at Play?"; and Kirkham, "An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*."

good sense” (104). Marcel Janssens also sees the *brigata* as having a strictly philosophical, moralizing purpose, given that their rhetoric is meant to “impress ideas and morals upon their audience” (138).

The very word *brigata* is “deeply interwoven with issues of masculinity, social status, and economic power” (Barolini, “Sociology of the Brigata” 5). In the sonnets of Folgore da San Gimignano (c. 1270–c. 1322), “The ‘brigata nobile e cortese’ is also called ‘la brigata franca’ ... that is, an economically well-endowed, financially emancipated, and therefore self-evidently all-male *brigata*” (Barolini, “Sociology of the Brigata” 12).<sup>193</sup> In the *Decameron*, there are thirteen all-male *brigata*; of these, readers are undoubtedly most familiar with the one comprising Calandrino and his “friends,” and Betto Brunelleschi’s group.<sup>194</sup> There are also two all-female *brigata* in the text: in III.6 (“la brigata delle donne di Catella”) and in the Introduction to Day Four (the group of women seen by Filippo Balducci and his son and referred to as geese). Boccaccio also features all-female *brigata* in his other works, such as the groups of nymphs in the *Caccia di Diana* and the *Ninfale fiesolano*, as well as in his *Rime* (“Sociology of the Brigata” 15).

Although a mixed-gender *brigata* is typically problematic in terms of sexuality (that is, for the challenge of maintaining chastity within the group), single-gender groups suffer their own problems as well. Take, for instance, the ‘group’ of women in the Introduction to Day Four: despite the fact that they are a very different type of group than the *brigata* of the frame story, they possess a strange power as a conglomerate of women.

---

<sup>193</sup> In note 26 on the same page: “‘brigata franca’ = ‘libera cioè da ogni preoccupazione economica’ ... This *brigata* cannot be ‘lieta’ if it is not ‘franca.’”

<sup>194</sup> These all-male *brigata* are found in I.6, II.5, V.3, V.7, VI.6, VI.9, VI.10, VIII.4, VIII.6, VIII.9, IX.5, IX.8, and X.2 (see Barolini, “Sociology of the Brigata” 14n31).

Their sexuality—unintentional as it may be—has a powerful effect on the naïve, sheltered boy. In the *DS* Dionigi warns against making contact with, or even gazing upon, “malicious” women such as these, since they have the ability to burn and destroy everything they touch.<sup>195</sup>

If an all-female or mixed-gender *brigata* poses problems pertaining to lust and chastity, the problems faced by all-male *brigata* center chiefly on aggression and competition. Michael Calabrese and Ray Fleming explore these dynamics among the men in the Boccaccian *brigata* and find them to be repressive. According to Fleming, “The image of the aggressive male whose assertion of energy and *ego* gives no opportunity for feminine character to evolve is also an image of repression.”<sup>196</sup> Although Fleming seems to indicate that this repression is placed upon female characters, male characters can also suffer from the same repression in an all-male group (like the *brigata* of the *DS*). As Calabrese notes, “Aggressive male competition can overwhelm and mock the quest for holiness if not channeled productively into the works of charity and compassionate brotherhood.”<sup>197</sup>

Retaining chastity is one of the biggest hurdles for a mixed-gender *brigata*. The group in the *Decameron* is composed of ten friends—some of whom are ambiguously related to each other and others who might already be in a sexual relationship—who spend much of their shared time discussing and narrating sexually explicit material.

---

<sup>195</sup> “Perciòche, dice Girolamo santo, Nel modo, che s’abbrucia subito colui, che tocca il fuoco, così il tatto dell’uomo, e della donna sente la sua natura, e intende la diversità del sesso” [“Because of this, says Saint Jerome, in this way, he who touches fire immediately burns himself, thus is the touch of man, and of the woman feeling nature, and signifies the diversity of sex”] (*DS* I.5, p. 45). In the margin, Dionigi cites “S. Gir. contra Ioviniano” (Saint Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum*).

<sup>196</sup> Fleming, “Happy Endings? Resisting Women and the Economy of Love in Day Five of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 37.

<sup>197</sup> Calabrese, “Male Piety and Sexuality in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 263.

However, despite the brazen topics of their narration, the close quarters in which they live, eat and bathe, and their fondness for one another, they do not cross the line into sexual relations (Boccaccio insists that they maintained their “onestà” in his Conclusion). Even the landscape is said to be sexually charged.<sup>198</sup> If the fact that they are able to travel—and band together at all—is a virtual impossibility, their constancy and restraint is even more anomalous, especially considering the weakness of the characters in many of their stories.<sup>199</sup> A few scholars have challenged this notion of such a ‘pristine’ *brigata*, however: both Jessica Levenstein and Tobias Foster Gittes see their narratives as merely transferences of sexual interest, much like a fetish.<sup>200</sup> If this is true, we must also consider this predilection among the all-male *brigata* of the *DS*: when the women are removed from the frame because of the alleged dangers of their company, who, or what, replaces them?

### III. Dionigi's *brigata*

#### III.1 Numerology and Onomastics

---

<sup>198</sup> “...the fact that the *brigata* does not succumb to sexual activity despite the fact that this particular *locus amoenus* seems to be particularly amenable to sexual activities is evidence of the moral fortitude achieved in the course of their sojourn” (Gittes, “Boccaccio’s ‘Valley of Women’: Fetishised Foreplay in *Decameron* VI” 173n37, quoting Jonathan Usher’s article entitled “Frame and Novella Gardens in the *Decameron*”).

<sup>199</sup> See Barolini, “Sociology of the Brigata” 20: “There is quite a lot of explicit sexualized banter between members of the *brigata* as the *Decameron* progresses, and Boccaccio also overtly thematizes the question of the *brigata*’s own moral compass, stressing from the beginning their honour and virtue or *onestà*, and then testing the pressure he can put on their honour and virtue and still consider it intact.”

<sup>200</sup> See Gittes 166 (“While critics have tended to laud the *brigata* for their conspicuous abstinence from sex, this attitude is really tantamount to applauding a shoe fetishist for exhibiting such prodigious fortitude in diverting his or her sexual interest to footwear”); and Levenstein, “Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 328 (“The *brigata* puts pleasure to use, conducting their erotic impulses toward narration instead of sex”).



Where numerology is concerned for the *DS brigata*, it corresponds almost exactly to Boccaccio's in that there are ten storytellers who each tell ten 'stories' (*ragionamenti*) over a period of ten days. While Dionigi's group is not divided by gender, there is still an initial group of seven members who later meet three more before embarking on their shared journey. Dionigi's storytellers even narrate and perform their *canzoni* in the same order as their Boccaccian counterparts each day. Therefore, any numerological analyses that can be applied to the original *brigata* may also be applied to the second.

Although there are a few pieces published on the *DS* at the current moment, none treats the onomastics of the names of Dionigi's *brigata* members. As mentioned previously, Dionigi states in his Introduction that the names of these men are *not* pseudonyms, due to the fact that they are "spiritual enough" not to fear any ill repute stemming from his characterization of them. Boccaccio chooses to protect his *brigata*—specifically the female members—by giving them names "alle qualità di ciascuna convenienti o in tutto o in parte" ("more or less appropriate to the character of each," *Dec.* Proemio 51) and even gives the whole collection of stories a nickname as well (the "Prencipe Galeotto").<sup>201</sup> On the other hand, Dionigi is not concerned with this kind of protection, either with his characters or with his book as a whole, which gives his *Decameron* a slightly more realistic and less fictional quality.

Dionigi's *brigata* members correspond to Boccaccio's, both numerologically and, for the most part, functionally. The similarities between Pampinea and Nicostrato, and between Dioneo and Gherardo, are the only noticeable ones, since both Nicostrato and Gherardo in the *DS* display the same personality traits and a few of the same tendencies

---

<sup>201</sup> See Sasso for the effects of Boccaccio's falsification of names on the realistic qualities of his work (158).

as their Boccaccian counterparts. The rest of the *brigata* is neither easily distinguishable nor remarkable, nor are the men given notable physical descriptions, let alone personal characteristics. This observation lines up with Kirkham's on the individuality of the Boccaccian *brigata*: she maintains that "Only Dioneo, Filostrato, and Pampinea possess distinctive 'qualities' while the rest of the group are almost indistinguishably alike" ("An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*" 2).

So, why expound on the onomastics of this *brigata* if its members are so indistinguishable? Sasso writes that the onomastics of the Boccaccian group serve to illustrate all possibilities of connotation, creating characters that are alive and who take their characteristics right from their names.<sup>202</sup> It is true that Dionigi's *Decameron* is heavily plagiarized and his *brigata* is essentially a mirror of Boccaccio's. Nevertheless, the names that he chooses for his storytellers might tell more about him as an author than the entire text of the *DS* can. Moreover, the names afford more insight into the post-Tridentine spiritualization 'sub-genre' to which this work belongs. In this section I will briefly outline the onomastics of each member of the *DS brigata* and analyze the group prosopographically, as well as contextualize them as characters within the work and the 'genre.' It might be worth mentioning that a good number of the *brigata* members share historical aspects of their names with other members: for example, martyrdom under Diocletian, habitation in Egypt (especially Alexandria), and other thematic connections.<sup>203</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> "L'onomastica allusiva viene pienamente sfruttata in tutte le sue possibilità di connotazione, con l'intento di comporre del personaggio un ritratto quanto mai vivo e calzante, che proprio dal nome prenda le mosse e si sviluppi" (Sasso 160).

<sup>203</sup> Concerning geographical connections, Egypt is a common factor among the names Teofilo, Cirillo, and Nicandro; Alexandria among Teofilo, Cirillo, and Panfilo; and Cilicia (a Roman province located in ancient Anatolia) among Crisippo and Teofilo. Nicostrato, Teodoro, Nicandro, and Crisogono

The name Nicostrato (“victorious army” in Greek)<sup>204</sup> belongs to several different historical figures, among them a martyred Roman soldier, a comic poet, and a philosopher. Saint Nicostratus is figured among the Four Crowned Martyrs, who are actually nine saints divided into two groups—Nicostratus falls into the second group with Saints Claudius, Castorius, Simplicius and Symphorian (Simpronian). According to legend these men suffered martyrdom at the same time as Saint Sebastian (however, some sources indicate that this story is untrustworthy).<sup>205</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Saints* tells us, with some doubt, that Nicostratus was a Roman soldier who was martyred alongside his companion Antiochus for their role in the *passio* of Procopius of Caesarea.<sup>206</sup> Claudius Nicostratus was the name of a middle-platonist philosopher who was active in the second century C.E. in the Athenian School.<sup>207</sup> It is not clear whether he is meant to be the inspiration for Dionigi’s Nicostrato; rather, it makes more sense that Dionigi

---

are all names of martyred saints; all four of these men (excluding Crisogono) were martyred under Diocletian. All ten members (excluding Crisippo) share names with Catholic saints.

<sup>204</sup> Unless otherwise stated, name etymologies come from the Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper>) or the Online Etymology Dictionary (<http://www.etymonline.com>).

<sup>205</sup> See *The Book of Saints. A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonized by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & Other Martyrologies* 143. Henceforth I will refer to this source as *TBOS*.

<sup>206</sup> “I tribuni Nicostrato e Antioco e i loro compagni soldati sono noti soltanto per il ruolo secondario da essi sostenuto nella *passio*, del resto favolosa, di Procopio di Cesarea. Si può dunque, a buon diritto, non solo dubitare del loro martirio, ma anche della loro stessa esistenza. Nicostrato ed Antioco sono tuttavia annunciati nei sinassari bizantini, come compagni di martirio di Procopio, ma senza alcuna particolare notizia, in date diverse: 7, 19, 20 e 21 maggio. Sono inoltre menzionati nella notizia di s. Procopio all’8 giugno. Sconosciuti ai martirologi medievali dell’Occidente, Nicostrato ed Antioco sono stati introdotti da C. Baronio nel Martirologio Romano al 21 maggio” [“The tribunes Nicostratus and Antiochus and their fellow soldiers are known only for the secondary roles they played in the *passio*, mostly fabled, of Procopius of Caesarea. One could rightly not only doubt their martyrdom, but also their very existence. Nicostratus and Antiochus are nonetheless mentioned in the Byzantine synaxaria [calendars of saints] as companions to Procopius’ martyrdom, but without any particular news, on different dates: May 7, 19, 20, and 21. They are also mentioned in the news of Saint Procopius on the 8th of June. Unknown to medieval martyrologies of the West, Nicostratus and Antiochus were introduced by C. Baronio in the *Roman Martyrology* on May 21”] (*Enciclopedia dei Santi (Bibliotheca Sanctorum)*).

<sup>207</sup> For more information on this philosopher, see A. Gioè, *Filosofi medioplatonici del II secolo d.C.* and J. M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*.

would have modeled his *brigata* members, especially his principal character, after saints. In the *DS* Nicostrato is the narrator of the following *ragionamenti*: I.10, II.3, III.2, IV.2, V.6, VI.2, VII.6, VIII.7, IX.7, X.7; his ten stories do not follow a specific theme, but two of them concentrate on the negative effects of the respective theme of the day (avarice, and forgoing the practice of almsgiving), while two others explain the usefulness of the day's theme—tribulation and patience. Furthermore, Nicostrato is a character in Boccaccio's *Decameron*: he appears as a character in VII.9, which is narrated by Panfilo.

Crisippo (from χρυσός, gold, and ἵππος, horse) shares a name most notably with Chrysippus of Soli, a Stoic philosopher who was active in the third century B.C.E., as well as with a few characters in Greek mythology, one of whom is said to have founded the city of Chrysippa in Cilicia (where Soli is also located). Crisippo is the only member of this *brigata* to have a non-biblical, non-saint, non-Christian name.<sup>208</sup> The fact that his name alludes to a Stoic philosopher is interesting, especially if we recall Dionigi's lengthy diatribe against ancient philosophers seen in Day Ten (Nicandro is the 'narrator' of the rant).<sup>209</sup> However, Chrysippus as a historical figure is not mentioned in the *DS*; the Stoics are mentioned only once.<sup>210</sup> Crisippo the *DS* character narrates I.3, II.10, III.3, IV.5, V.8, VI.1, VII.7, VIII.6, IX.1, and X.8, the main unifying theme of which seems to be a positive attitude toward whatever is being discussed and seeing the benefits (or

---

<sup>208</sup> One possibility, although reaching, is that his name might refer to Saint Crispin (It.: Crispino), also martyred in the 3rd century C.E. under Diocletian.

<sup>209</sup> See chapter 2, page 85.

<sup>210</sup> *DS* II.3, p. 108: "Certamente il Maestro dell'Humiltà fu Christo Signor nostro. Imperoche, non gli Stoici, non i Platonici, non i Peripatetici, non gli Epicuri, non i Manichei; nè finalmente gli altri, ò siano Filosofi, ò siano heretici, hanno ritrovata la Santa Humiltà, ma Christo" ["Certainly the Master of Humility was our Lord Christ. Thus, neither the Stoics, nor the Platonists, nor the Peripatetics, nor the Epicureans, nor the Manichaeans; nor finally the others, be they Philosophers or heretics, have found holy Humility, only Christ"]. See Josiah B. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* 153-60 for Chrysippus's theories concerning the existence of God and/or gods.

“usefulness”) of the more negative themes (i.e. tribulation and poverty). In III.3 he uses Jacob, Rachel and Leah as examples in his analysis of the *vita attiva* versus the *vita contemplativa*, and in X.8, he compares the eight Beatitudes to a sumptuous feast—a strange simile, given the concurrent famine, but appropriate when considering the Word of God as the *brigata*’s ‘nourishment’.

Chrisogono, whose name derives from the Greek for “born of gold” (χρυσός, gold, and γένος, born or begotten of), shares his name with another saint martyred under the reign of Diocletian, although not much is known about him or his life.<sup>211</sup> The *Martyrologium romanum* describes his death, celebrated on the 24th of November (also his birthday), in the following way: “This is the birthday of Saint Chrysogonus, martyr, who, after a long imprisonment in chains for the constant confession of Christ, he was by order of Diocletian taken to Aquileia, where he consummated his martyrdom by being beheaded and thrown into the sea.”<sup>212</sup> He is also mentioned in the second volume of the *Legenda aurea*.<sup>213</sup> As *brigata* member in the *DS* he narrates I.2, II.1, III.10, IV.8, V.5, VI.4, VII.8, VIII.1, IX.4, and X.1; these *ragionamenti* do not necessarily have a unifying theme, but he uses many biblical examples to illustrate virtues such as humility, tribulation, patience, and beatitude. Chrisogono sings the most songs in the *DS*—four, to be exact.

Teodoro (“gift of God” in Greek) is the name of a great number of Catholic saints, including Theodore the Studite, a ninth-century Byzantine monk and one of the leading

---

<sup>211</sup> “Chrysogonus, martyr. D. 304 (?); f.d. 24 November. This martyr is among those named in the Roman canon (eucharistic prayer) of the Mass, but nothing is now known about him, except that he probably suffered at Aquileia in northern Italy. He figures in the legend of St. Anastasia, and has been venerated in Rome since at least the end of the fifth century” (*The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* 85-86). Henceforth I will refer to this work as *PDOS*.

<sup>212</sup> *The Roman Martyrology*, 24 November.

<sup>213</sup> *The Golden Legend* II: 333-34 (chapter 171).

figures in monasticism<sup>214</sup>—this reference certainly explains the monastic behavior of the *brigata* in their daily activities, some of which is shared by the Boccaccian *brigata* as well. The *Legenda aurea* devotes a page-long chapter (165) to Saint Theodore (not the Studite) describing his martyrdom under Diocletian and Maximian. He was violently put to death by the co-emperors for refusing to renounce his beliefs in God; Jacopo da Voragine writes in the *Golden Legend*: “The judge then commanded that Theodore be hung from a limb and have his flanks torn so cruelly with iron hooks as to expose the ribs. As he hung there, the judge said to him: ‘Theodore, do you want to be with us or with your Christ?’ Theodore: ‘With my Christ I was and am and I will be!’ So a fire was lighted around him and in the fire he breathed his last, yet his body was not harmed by the flames” (*Legenda aurea* II, 291). The name Teodoro appears in the *Decameron* in day V.7; as *DS* character he narrates I.7, II.2, III.1, IV.10, V.1, VI.7, VII.2, VIII.5, IX.3, and X.3, many of which concentrate on the extreme ugliness of sins (lust, pride, and avarice) and disdain for the city life and earthly riches.<sup>215</sup> In IV.10 he identifies Dominican oration as that which pleases the Lord the most.

The name Cirillo has many connotations, an important one being the derivation from the Greek name Kyrillos (Κυρίλλος, from κυριος, “lord”), a name used to refer to God or Jesus in the Greek Bible. As a historical figure Cirillo can refer to Cyril of

---

<sup>214</sup> “Theodore Studites (St) Ab. R.M. Nov. 11. 759–826. A native of Constantinople who became a monk at the monastery of the Studium ... in that city. In 799 he became abbot, and under his rule the monastery developed into a centre from which a monastic revival spread throughout the East, its influence reaching to Mt Athos and later to Russia, Rumania and Bulgaria. Studium stood for all that is lasting in monastic observance: liturgical prayer, community life, enclosure, poverty, studies and manual work (the monks excelled in calligraphy). The community, with St Theodore at their head, uncompromisingly defended the supreme authority of the see of Rome, the veneration of images (against a series of iconoclastic emperors), and opposed Caesaropapism in every form. Theodore suffered banishment for seven years on this account. He is one of the great figures of monastic history” (*TBOS* 565).

<sup>215</sup> His choice of Lust for theme of his Day One *ragionamento* is interesting, given that his counterpart in the *Decameron* (Filostrato) tells some of the raciest stories in that work.

Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria, or Saint Cyril, a linguist who supposedly created the Cyrillic alphabet in the ninth century. It is difficult to say which Cyril influenced Dionigi's choice of the same name for one of his *brigata* members in the *DS*, especially since Cyril of Alexandria, despite being a famous theologian, was known for his opposition to the views of Saint John Chrysostom, whom Dionigi cites very frequently in his work. (In fact, Cyril composed a deposition against the saint alongside his uncle, Theophilus of Alexandria—another name that appears among the *DS brigata*.<sup>216</sup>) This same Cyril is also considered one of the most powerful thinkers of his time, as well as one of the most dangerous; he is deemed responsible for the murder of Hypatia, a female philosopher, and for the overthrow of the archbishop Nestorius.<sup>217</sup> Cirillo in the *DS* is purported to be a bit older, if not wiser, than the rest of his companions: he is described in the Conclusion to Day Four as having “ormai canute chiome” (“already white hair”).<sup>218</sup> His *racionamenti* (I.5, II.5, III.6, IV.1, V.10, VI.6, VII.5, VIII.8, IX.5, X.6) tend to focus on the double nature of both virtues and sins; he lauds chastity while warning against the practices of “malvage femine,” examines the miseries of this life and the happiness to be found in the next, includes flagellants in his discussion of the evils of worldly riches and prosperity, and provides examples of false patience. In defining the practice of *oratione* in IV.1, he references both “i santi” and “i Grammatici,” but does not specify who is whom for either group.

---

<sup>216</sup> “Cyril of Alexandria, bishop and theologian. B. at Alexandria, c. 380; d. there, 444; f.d. 27 June. He was a nephew of that Theophilus of Alexandria who engineered the deposition of St. John Chrysostom, in which Cyril himself took part. In 412 he succeeded his uncle in the see of Alexandria, and was soon exercising authority with a hastiness and violence that led to much trouble...” (*PDOS* 100).

<sup>217</sup> See Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*.

<sup>218</sup> Compare this to the “capo biondissimo della Fiammetta” (“very blonde head of Fiammetta”) in the corresponding Boccaccian text.

As scholars of Boccaccio's *Decameron* have noted, Panfilo's name means "friend of, or to, all" (from the Greek παν, "all" and φιλος, "friend"). The latinized Pamphilus is the name of a martyred saint who lived and taught as a priest in Alexandria in the third and fourth centuries C.E.<sup>219</sup> It is also, K. P. Harrington notes, the name of a very famous Medieval Latin comedy, "...an anonymous work of around 1100, [which] was so popular that it was copied out literally hundreds of times in little manuscript copies—whence our term, 'pamphlets.'"<sup>220</sup> According to *The Book of Saints*, there were at least four different saints named Pamphilus; the most salient one describes the saint (most likely the one Dionigi chose for his Panfilo to represent) in these terms: "Himself the greatest biblical scholar of his day, he fostered learning and protected all students. His household became famous for its practice of fraternal love, slaves and domestics being treated as sons and brothers ... After years of imprisonment and repeated tortures, he was martyred under Galerius" (*TBOS* 455).

Between the *Decameron* and the *DS* the name Panfilo is very significant, and for very different reasons. Panfilo is king of the Tenth Day in the *Decameron* (which treats deeds of munificence) and prince in the Sixth Day of the *DS*, dedicated to the theme of avarice. In the *DS* Teofilo is the equivalent of Boccaccio's Panfilo, and the *DS* Panfilo is the equivalent of Boccaccio's Elissa.<sup>221</sup> We have seen why the number 10 is significant; 6

---

<sup>219</sup> "Pamphilus, martyr. B. at Beirut, c. 240; d. at Caesarea Maritima, 16 February 309; f.d. 1 June. He studied at the Christian school at Alexandria, and spent the rest of his life at Caesarea in Palestine, where he was ordained priest. He taught in the school there, gathered a celebrated library (afterwards dispersed by the Arabs), and did important work on the text of the Bible. While in prison because of his religion he wrote a treatise, 'apology', in defence of Origen's teaching. Pamphilus was eventually put to death for his faith at the same time as St Elias and his companions; six other martyrs suffered with them" (*PDOS* 273).

<sup>220</sup> Harrington, *Medieval Latin* 367.

<sup>221</sup> Note that Dionigi chooses to replace *Panfilo* with *Teofilo*, bottlenecking Panfilo's love for all into one love for God; however, it is also interesting that he retains the name Panfilo for another *brigata*



holds its importance in the six ages of the world and the six ages of man, as Isidore of Seville notes in his *Etymologies*.<sup>222</sup> Panfilo holds special significance as a storyteller in the *Decameron* for narrating the first tale of the first Day, which is in itself one of the most well-known *Decameron* stories (that of Ser Cepparello/San Ciappelletto).

Of the ten stories that Panfilo tells in the *Decameron*, more than half feature some sort of deception that is central to the tale's plot. Aside from the novella of Ser Cepparello, Panfilo examines deception, dreams vs. reality, fraudulence, and false appearances in II.7 (Alatiel), III.4 (Dom Felice and Friar Puccio), VI.5 (Giotto), VII.9 (Lidia, Pirro and Nicostrato), and X.9 (Messer Torello and Saladin).<sup>223</sup> In contrast, Panfilo in the *DS* narrates ten very different *ragionamenti* with no clear unifying theme. He covers various subjects, from envy, tribulation, poverty and solitude, to saintly humility, oration, alms-giving, and patience. He provides examples of figures and saints from both the Old and New Testaments in his discussions of solitude, tribulation, and patience. In Day Six, his reign day, he chooses to discuss the theme of tithes as his free-topic *ragionamento*, wherein he lauds the practice of tithes and discusses at length its benefits. Panfilo's *canzone* in the *DS* also appears at the end of Day Six. The Day's theme is avarice, which is personified in the *canzone* as a female beast that greedily devours everything in her path.

Gherardo is one of two members of this *brigata* who does not have a name derived from the Greek language. His name comes from the Old French *Gerart*, of Germanic origin; in Old High German *Gerhard* literally means "strong with the spear,"

---

member instead of replacing it outright. It is unclear why this new Panfilo has replaced Elissa and not any other member.

<sup>222</sup> See *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, edited and translated by Stephen A. Barney.

<sup>223</sup> It is important to note that X.9 does not deal explicitly with deception but rather the art of seeing past external appearances.

from *ger* “spear,” and *hart*, “hard.” As one might recall from Petrarch’s account of his ascent of Mount Ventoux, it is the name of his brother, who was a Carthusian monk. The name Gerard (or Gerald) appears quite frequently in dictionaries of saints’ names; among the most famous is Saint Gerard of Villamagna, also known as Gerard of Monza, who was a Franciscan tertiary in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the *Legenda aurea* a bishop and martyr by the same name is said to have given homilies telling of the glory of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary: “Indeed, Gerard in his homilies tells to what height of heavenly glory and honor [Mary] was elevated: ‘The Lord Jesus Christ alone can give such greatness as he gave to his mother—greatness such that she continuously receives praise and honor from the divine majesty itself, is attended by choirs of Angels, compassed about by troops of Archangels, accompanied on all sides ... The ineffable Trinity also applauds her with unceasing dance, and the grace with which the three Persons totally infuse her draws the attention of all to her...’” (*Legenda aurea* II, 85). Considering the vast amount of mention and praise Mary is given in the *DS*, this connection makes sense. In the *DS* Gherardo takes the same storytelling position as Dioneo in the *Decameron*: aside from Days One, Seven, and Ten, he narrates the ninth story of each Day. His *ragionamenti* do not follow a common theme; however, two of them include strange comparisons: he compares avarice to an onion, the fire of sulfur, a lake, and a tree’s roots in Day Six (referencing Saint Paul), and patience to a tree, a wild donkey, and certain herbs in Day Nine (see Appendix C).

Nicandro (“victory of a man” in Greek), like Nicostrato, was a soldier martyred under Diocletian in the early fourth century alongside his wife, Daria, and a fellow soldier named Marciano. *The Book of Saints* describes him as an Egyptian physician-

turned-soldier who was “condemned for ministering to the Christians in prison” (*TBOS* 437) and beheaded; the *Roman Martyrology* adds that he refused to make sacrifices to the pagan gods due to his strong faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>224</sup> Other than this information, not much is known about the saint. The *DS* Nicandro chooses sloth for his Day One *ragionamento* and tells readers how to avoid it. He references Saint Bernard in regard to saintly humility and quotes the saint’s reasoning on humility’s triplicate nature (divided into penitence, justice, and mercy). While most of his other *ragionamenti* (I.8, II.4, III.8, IV.3, V.7, VI.3, VII.4, VIII.10, IX.8, X.4) follow suit with the other narrators’ themes, in Day Nine he complements Gherardo’s list of things to compare to saintly patience, adding gold, the “Crisopasso d’Egitto” (a type of gem similar to chalcedony), and a rose.

Ugone, like Gherardo, is the other *brigata* member whose name does not derive from the Greek; instead, his name comes from the Germanic element *hug*, meaning “heart, mind or spirit.” There are a great number of listings for “Hugh” in *The Book of Saints* and *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, the most famous being Hugh of Cluny, Hugh of Grenoble, and Hugh of Lincoln. Hugh of Saint Victor appears in the *Legenda aurea* (“182. The Dedication of a Church,” 385-86). In the *DS* Ugone narrates I.6, II.6, III.7, IV.7, V.2, VI.8, VII.1, VIII.4, IX.10, and X.5, some of which feature the most intriguing topics in the collection. His selection for discussion in Day One is drunkenness and the condemnation of drunks, especially women, since their drunkenness leads inevitably to uncouth behavior and often threatens the maintenance of their virginity.<sup>225</sup> In Day Two he discusses Saint Bernard and the ‘sette capi di lepra’; in other Days he compares the solitary life of man to that of a wild goat and quotes the difficulty of a rich

---

<sup>224</sup> *The Roman Martyrology*, 17 June.

<sup>225</sup> “Non è cosa più difforme della Donna, ch’è nelle delitie, e non è cosa più brutta di quella, ch’è ubriaca, dice Giovanni Chrisostomo santo” (*DS* I.6, p. 53).

man entering into Heaven (as in the fabled passing through the eye of a needle); his contribution to the theme of Avarice is both a rant against avaricious tyrants and an encomium of good Christian administrators.

Finally there is Teofilo, the character who corresponds to the Boccaccian Panfilo. Instead of bearing a name that refers to “friend to all” or “all-loving,” Teofilo’s name means “friend of God” in Greek (from θεος, “god,” and φίλος, “friend”). The name Theophilus appears in the Bible as the dedicatee of both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1). As mentioned previously, this is also the name of the uncle of Cyril of Alexandria. Both the *Legenda aurea* and *The Book of Saints* tell of a certain Theophilus the Penitent who, upon being deposed from his position as archdeacon of Adana in Cilicia, made a pact with the devil; he then repented with the help of the Virgin Mary, who appeared to him in a vision, and regained favor among his public.<sup>226</sup> His *racionamenti* in the *DS* are I.1, II.7, III.4, IV.6, V.1, VI.5, VII.9, VIII.2, IX.6, and X.9, which do not follow any unifying theme; they mostly complement the others’ thematic discussions and give examples from the Bible regarding how to avoid the sins and replicate the virtues mentioned therein.

The servants in the *DS* are ten in number (as opposed to the *Decameron*’s seven) and each performs a specific menial or managerial job—three are assigned to the tables, two to the rooms, two to the kitchen, and one each for *credentiero*, *siniscalco*, and *spenditore*.<sup>227</sup> In the *Decameron*, these jobs are divided “traditionally” along gender lines,

---

<sup>226</sup> See *Legenda aurea* II: 157 (“Chapter 131. The Birth of the Virgin”) and *TBOS* 569. The latter source mentions that the story of Theophilus making a pact with the devil was a definite influence for Goethe’s *Faust*.

<sup>227</sup> *Credentiero*, *siniscalco* and *spenditore* were elected offices in the courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For more information in primary works, see, for example: Cesare Evitascandalo,

according to Laura Di Sisto: “the women are required to look after the menial tasks while the men are given the greater responsibilities of management and maintaining finances” (65); Susanna Barsella points out that their particular distribution of work also reflects the respective social status of their lords and ladies (236). All but two names (Bambetta and Tiberio) also appear in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (the eight are Amerigo, Arrighetto, Giannotto, Manfredi, Pasquino, Ricciardo, Rinieri and Ruberto), and only Tiberio appears in the *Roman Martyrology*—he shares a name with a saint who was martyred under Diocletian in 303 CE.<sup>228</sup> The servants in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* all have classical or literary names; the same is mostly true for Dionigi’s ten servants.<sup>229</sup>

### III.2 Functionality

As fellow narrators, the roles that the *brigata* members play in the *DS* are not those of mediators. Although Dionigi’s macrotext is heavily plagiarized from Boccaccio’s, any sort of litigious or intervening dialogue is not present among his *brigata*. Unlike the members of Boccaccio’s *brigata*, those in Dionigi’s play a very passive role in providing each other with feedback, positive or negative, after each *ragionamento*. They rarely give any type of evaluation after singular *novelle*, and when they do respond to the narration

---

*Dialogo del Maestro di casa* (1606), and Sigismondo Sigismondi, *Prattica cortigiana morale, et economica* (1604).

<sup>228</sup> In the *Decameron* the following characters have the same names: Amerigo Abate (*Dec.* V.7); Arrighetto Capece (II.6); Giannotto di Civignì (I.2) and Giannotto da Procida (II.6); Manfredi, Re di Sicilia (II.6 and X.6); Pasquino (IV.7); Riccardo di Chinzica (II.10 and IV.10), Ricciardo Manardi (V.4), and Ricciardo Minutolo (III.6); Rinieri (VIII.7) and Puccio di Rinieri (III.4, III.5); Ruberto (VII.8) and Ruberto, Re di Napoli (VI.3). For Tiberio, see *The Roman Martyrology*, 10 November.

<sup>229</sup> “Sono attestati in numerose opere latine e in tal modo ‘si contrappongono ai nomi realistici e quotidiani che ricorrono nelle novelle; e contribuiscono così anch’essi a dare al mondo della ‘cornice’ una patina di sopramondo’, come osserva il Branca” [“These are attested in numerous Latin works and thus ‘are opposed to realistic and quotidian names that recur in the *novelle*; and they contribute by giving to the world of the *cornice* a patina of the overworld’, as Branca observes”] (Branca, qtd. in Sasso 158n35).

of the others it is as a collective voice at the end of each Day. Throughout Day One of the *DS*, all stories are collectively “comendato,” “lodato,” and received “non senza molto contento,” and if any facts recounted within the stories are to be disputed, other recognized authorities (such as the Bible and ancient philosophical writings) are quoted in their discourse. All reactions to the *canzoni* are practically identical and formulaic; for instance, in the Conclusion to Day Four: “the devout *brigata* gave much delight to Teodoro for his song, and they lauded highly the quality of concepts, the beauty of the verses, and the gracious manner of the song in turn.”<sup>230</sup> Even when the members disagree with stories or proposals for daily themes, they keep their opinions to themselves; this often works out for the best and peace is maintained as a result.<sup>231</sup>

There are many instances in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* where the *brigata* members—especially the female members—laugh in reaction to a tale. The *brigata* members of the *DS* are never seen laughing in reaction to the stories told (not that there is much comical content, anyway). Likewise, they are never seen dancing, but they do sing as a group and listen to music together, usually accompanied by Nicostrato’s *cetra*

---

<sup>230</sup> “Arrecò molto diletto alla devota brigata Teodoro con la sua canzone, e chi di loro la qualità de i concetti, chi la bellezza de i versi, e chi la gratiosa maniera del canto lodò sommamente” (*DS* IV Concl., p. 281).

<sup>231</sup> For example, in the Conclusion to Day Seven, the members find Nicandro’s proposal for the next day (“la Santa Tribulatione”) “boring” but say nothing so to keep the peace (*DS* VII Concl., p. 453). In the next day’s conclusion, we see that everything went well despite a boring theme: “Se la proposta haveva alcuni de i compagni turbati, quando di doversi parlare della tribulatione si propose dal Prencipe; fu poi così caro a tutti, che di quella materia si fosse trattato da loro, che tutti compiutamente restarono sodisfatti, e contenti in tanto, che d’altro ragionare non havrebbon voluto” [“If the proposal had disturbed some of the companions, when the need to speak of tribulation was proposed by the Prince; it was then dear to all, that that material was treated by them, and that all were so greatly satisfied and content with it that they would not have wanted to discuss any other theme”] (*DS* VIII Concl., p. 512). Furthermore, even when they are intimidated by the theme proposed for Day Ten, they still acquiesce to the Prince’s decision: “Parve a i Giovani timorosi troppo importante, e troppo difficile la materia proposta dal Prencipe loro; pur confidatisi nel divino soccorso, tutti volentieri v’acconsentirono” [“It seemed to the timorous youths too important, and too difficult the material proposed by their Prince; but, confident in their divine assistance, they all agreed to it voluntarily”] (*DS* IX Concl., p. 578).

(zither). In the Introduction to the first Day, Gherardo refers to this type of activity as “recreatione.” When they are not being recreational, they spend their time reflecting somberly, meditating, or wandering about their surroundings, usually alone. There is no need to censor their *ragionamenti* or *canzoni* for a female audience, as Dioneo is asked to do in the Conclusion to Day Six in the *Decameron*, and the content of both is spiritual enough not to be censored anyway (although some do feature a hefty amount of misogyny).<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, since there are no female *brigata* members among the men, they do not serve as protectors of anyone along their journey, only as companions to each other.

Although their main roles are not as narratorial mediators, each *brigata* member must still serve as an adept listener and contributor to the theme of each Day. As can be seen from the Days Chart (see Appendix C), many *ragionamenti* in the *DS* are discussions that expand upon the one directly preceding them. In the Introduction to Day One, Gherardo addresses the rest of the group after Nicostrato’s initial proposal to leave the city of Fano, and explains his understanding of the group’s functions and obligations:

Noblest companions, if one is to speak the truth, as one must, I believe that we (us three, I mean, who were not present for the first *ragionamenti*) have a great obligation to the sense and to the circumstance that brought us here; where, far from many troubles and woes, we can have some recreation, without offending anyone, among much grief. I do not know what you intend to do with your thoughts: mine, I know very well, were left by me within the walls of the miserable City, when I left it to come here with you. Here, we are at the end, as you know, and yet each of us walks toward it; if you still wish to grieve the forsaken City, be content that I will return there where I left my thoughts, and recover them; so that

---

<sup>232</sup> Women are not mentioned in the *canzoni* except for the one sung at the conclusion of Day Five (by Gherardo, who is the equivalent of Dioneo in the *DS*). See Appendix A.

I alone will not be thoughtless among such a noble *brigata*, and without concern.<sup>233</sup>

Before the second group (consisting of Gherardo, Teofilo, and Teodoro) joined the first group of seven men, Nicostrato had been appealing to reason and common sense as motivators for the group to leave the suffering city behind.<sup>234</sup> Like Pampinea's, Nicostrato's speech consists mainly of retrospective reasons to depart from Fano. He does not explicitly cite recreation as a function of the group's sojourn—only “*onesti piaceri*” are mentioned at the end of his spiel, although hesitantly, and the opportunity to spend time in nature. Nicostrato emphasizes the prospective benefits of replacing cries of pain with the songs of birds, and of replacing the harshness of the city with a much more peaceful backdrop. Gherardo, on the other hand, enters into the group later, having not heard any of Nicostrato's words, and proposes a more recreational-based, forward-looking journey.

If the men in the *DS brigata* do not fulfill any particular roles in the narrative context of the *cornice*, they certainly seek to fulfill roles beyond the text, both as spiritual men and as Christian humans. They are careful to provide guidelines in almost every

---

<sup>233</sup> “Nobilissimi compagni, se s’ha à dire il vero, come si deve, io credo, che noi (di noi tre dico, che non fummo a i primi ragionamenti) molto obbligo dovemo havere al vostro senno, e al vostro avvedimento, che qui ci ha condotti; dove, lontani da tanti travagli, e da tanti cordogli, potremo qualche ricreatione pigliare, senza offendere altrui, in tanti affanni. Io non sò cio che voi de’ vostri pensieri v’intendete di fare; i miei, so ben’io, che furono da me lassati dentro alle mura della misera Città, quando con voi, per qui venire, poco fa m’uscij fuori. Qui semo per quel fine, che voi sapete, e però ciascuno à quello camini; che se pur vi voleste della tribulata Città dar qualch’affanno, contentatevi, ch’io ritorni là, dove i miei cosi fatti pensieri lassai, e me gli ripigli; accioche io solo non sia in cosi nobile brigata spensierato, e senza sollecitudine” (*DS I Intr.*, p. 8).

<sup>234</sup> “E natural ragione di ciascuno per conservar la sua vita quanto può, ogni cosa fuggire, ch’arrecandogli molestia, gli può esser di danno cagione; e molti hanno, per difender la lor vita, uccisi gli huomini, senza ch’eglino habbiano in niente patito, poi ch’è lecito con la forza scacciare la forza” [“It is the natural reason of everyone, in order to conserve his life as much as he can, to flee everything that causes nuisance; and many, in defending their life, have killed men without suffering at all, then making it licit to drive away force with force”] (*DS I Intr.*, p. 6).



*ragionamento* regarding the correct path to follow and the correct religious practices to perform. These outlines serve as a type of manual for both the other members of the *brigata* as well as the intended audience of the book. These ‘rules’ range from the very general (regarding the right type of prayer—which is Dominican) to the very specific (whether to stand or kneel during prayer).<sup>235</sup> Regardless of the content, biblical figures are almost always used in tandem as examples, both as examples to follow and those to avoid.<sup>236</sup>

Many citations of behavior to avoid involve women, either as examples of sinners themselves, or as a collective temptation for men to sin. A large component of the manual-like function of this book is geared toward chastity: clearly, by establishing an all-male *brigata* in the first place, Dionigi wishes to create a group in which the men function together more cohesively, with fewer distractions and temptations to sin while

---

<sup>235</sup> For example: “O quanto è buon Christiano colui, che non solo havrà bene imparato a mente il Simbolo, e l’oratione Dominicale, ma ch’anche l’insegnerà alle figliuole, e a i figli. O quanto è buon Christiano colui, che conoscendosi sicurtà appresso Dio de i figliuoli c’havrà tenuti al battesimo, non pure insegnerà loro il Simbolo, l’oratione Dominicale, e il Decalogo; ma gli correggerà, e castigherà etiandio, accioche vivano giusti, casti, e sobrij” [“Oh, what a good Christian is he who, having not only memorized the Dominican Symbol and Prayer, but who also will teach it to his daughters and sons. Oh, what a good Christian is he who, knowing the security given by God will baptize their children, not just teaching them the Dominican Symbol, prayer, and Decalogue; but will also correct them and castigate them, so that they will live rightly, chastely, and soberly”] (*DS* I.2, p. 23).

<sup>236</sup> In regards to practicing medicine without resorting to pagan rituals, Dionigi cites Isaac and Rebecca: “Che fece Isaac perche la sua moglie Rebecca di sterile diventasse feconda? Non corse alle naturali medecine, non a i fumi, non a i bagni, e non alle stregherie come molti sciocchi fanno al dì d’hoggi di poca fede; ma pregò il Signore, dice la scrittura, facendo oratione; & il Signor l’essaudi, e concepì Rebecca, che poi partorì Esaù, e Giacobbe” [“What did Isaac do so that his sterile wife Rebecca would become fecund? He did not run to natural medicines, nor to vapors, nor to the baths, and not to witchcraft as many stupid people of little faith do today; but he prayed to the Lord, the Scriptures say; and the Lord granted his wishes, and Rebecca conceived and then birthed Esau and Jacob”] (*DS* IV.8, p. 262; emphasis mine). Likewise, providing more examples for practicing *oratione*, he refers to the Apostles: “Tutti gli Apostoli, per esser brieve, erano concordevolmente, come poco dianzi v’ho detto, perseveranti nell’oratione con le Donne, e con Maria Madre di Giesu Christo” [“All of the Apostles, to be brief, were agreeably, as I have said before, perseverant in praying with women, and with Mary and Jesus Christ”] (*IV*.8, p. 266).

they are on their journey. Chrisogono explains in V.5 that as humans (and especially as males), our sensuality leads us only to Hell, which then places us under the power of Satan and hideous, tormenting demons for all eternity.<sup>237</sup> As a group of male friends, the *brigata* members help each other understand that any contact with women, whether in vision, touch, or even contemplation (for example, of the beauty of the Virgin Mary), can sabotage their efforts to remain on the correct path:

Do not look upon the errant and capricious woman, that by chance she will not catch you in her laces; do not wish to be often with the temptress, and do not listen to her, that for disgrace you will not perish in her efficacy. *Do not look upon the Virgin, that you will not, for misfortune, scandalize her beauty.* Turn your face from the beautified woman, and do not gaze internally at another's beauty. For the beauty of woman many have perished, and from this, concupiscence has almost lit a fire. Let us love, therefore, being far away from these women, not just being far away from their practices in order to obtain this great virtue of saintly chastity, because if we are not far from them, we will easily lose this great gift, wanting to live luxuriously with them, with infinite damage, and with irreparable loss of the benefits of paradise.<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>237</sup> “Oime, che se non lasseremo il mondo ingannevole, il mondo lasserà noi ancor che lo vogliamo seguitare. E dove miseri ci lasserà egli? Nelle nostre sensualità. E quelle dove ci meneranno? All’Inferno. E l’Inferno, che farà di noi? Ci darà in poter di Satanasso. E poi? E poi saremo perpetuamente puniti afflicti, e tormentati dai Demoni infernali, così disponente la Divina Giustitia. O, come puo esser questo, dice quel Sensuale da buon tempo, che’l mondo tratti così male coloro, che l’amano? ... Ah misero Sensuale, ahi carnalaccio; il mondo quanto è più piacevole, è tanto più pericoloso; e più ci dovemo guardar da lui quando ci adescia, e ci lusinga all’amor suo, che quando ci ammonisce, e ci spinge a disprezzarlo” [“Dear me, if we do not leave this deceptive world, the world will leave us before we want to follow it. And where will it leave us miserable ones? In our sensualities. And where will those lead us? To Hell. And Hell, what will it make of us? It will put us under the power of Satan. And then? And then we will be perpetually punished and afflicted, and tormented by infernal Demons, as commanded by Divine Justice. Oh, how could this be, says that sensual person from a better time, that the world treats those who love so poorly? ... Oh, miserable Sensual one, oh abuser of flesh; the more pleasing the world is, it is all the more dangerous; and we must look away from him more when he lures and seduces us to his love, than when he admonishes us and pushes us to disdain him”] (V.5, p. 306).

<sup>238</sup> “Non risguardare la femina vagola, e frascheggiata, accioche per disavventura non caggi ne’ suoi laccioli; ne voler’ essere spesso con la saltatrice, e non l’ascoltare, accioche per disgratia tu non perischi nell’efficacia di lei. *Non rimirare la vergine, accioche per mala ventura non ti scandalizzi nel la sua bellezza.* Rivolgi la tua faccia dalla femina abbellita, e non rimirar’ intorno all’altrui bellezza. Per la bellezza della donna molti perirono, e da questa la concupiscenza s’accende quasi fuoco. Amiami adunque, o diletta, l’esser lontano dal veder queste donne, non che d’esser lontani dalla pratica loro per haver questa

In an almost comical fashion, Chrisogono finishes this rant and his *ragionamento* for Day Five by exclaiming, “Ecco, ecco, che semo alla fine del mondo” (“Here we are at the end of the world”).

Although there are certainly many examples given throughout the *DS* of women to avoid in all senses, there are also just as many references to pure and saintly women (which I will treat in my final chapter). As for men, the *brigata* cite examples of those who either live correctly or whose lives are to serve as lessons: i.e. David, Samson, Herod, John the Baptist, Midas, Gondoforo “Re dell’India,” Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, and others. The most frequently-used example is, of course, Christ. Joseph (the son of Jacob and Rachel) is cited as the ideal of chastity, continence, and perseverance.<sup>239</sup> Several martyrs (male and female) are listed at the end of Day Nine, namely Stefano, Vincenzo, Lorenzo, Martino, Vitale, Gervasio, Protasio, Gregorio, Bonifatio, Adriano, Vittore, Cipriano, Arcadio, Giacomo, Barbara, Catarina, Lucia, Christina, Dorotea (of Caesarea), Margarita, Agata, and Teodosia (pp. 565-66). In Day Ten, moving outside of the Bible, names of philosophers who discuss “la vera beatitudine dell’uomo” are listed: Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Herilo, Aristotle, Theophrastus, “Aristotene,” Hecataeus, Timon, Simonides, Zeno, “gli altri Peripatetici,” and Epicurus (pp. 599-600). Even though these men are not considered religious, they are often referred to in religious

---

gran virtù della castità santa; perche se non saremo da loro lontani, di leggieri perderemo questo gran dono, lussoriosamente vivendo con loro, con infinito danno, e con irreparabile perdimento de i beni del paradiso” (*DS* I.5, pp. 45-46; emphasis mine). Saint Augustine is cited in the margin as “S. Agost. nel ser. 65. e nel ser. 67. a’ frati.”

<sup>239</sup> (Referring to Genesis 39): “Solamente dirò ..., che volendo perseverare nella virtù della castità, ò della continenza, vi specchiate nella persevanza [sic] di Gioseffo, che mai non volle acconsentire alle dishoneste voglie della sua Signora, ch’a ciò tanto il sollecitava” [“I will say only ..., that, wishing to persevere in the virtue of chastity, or of continence, make yourselves a mirror of the perseverance of Joseph, who never wanted to consent to the dishonest wishes of his Lady, who solicited much of him”] (VII.10, p. 452).

connotations, solidifying the religious and didactic functions of the *brigata*'s daily discussions.

### III.3 Individuality and Gender Dynamics

Michael Calabrese, in his article "Male Piety and Sexuality in Boccaccio's *Decameron*," declares that "[t]he ten days of ten tales of the *Decameron* do not offer a consistent or univocal treatment of any gender issue" (258). While this is a debatable statement for the *Decameron*, it is true for the *DS*, in both macro- and microtext, where (male) gender issues are all but completely erased by Dionigi. As I have mentioned before, Dionigi does not distinguish between the members of his *brigata* save for a few casual remarks on their appearances and a subtle hierarchy; they are presented as more of a 'hive mind' that produces one hundred discussions instead of provocative, entertaining stories. Where, in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, each of the storytellers offers differing views on complex subjects (love, religion, sin, etc.), Dionigi's frame characters are frustratingly static. Moreover, the dynamics of the latter group change significantly by not including any women. There is no sexual tension for Dionigi's *brigata* to face (at least none written into the pages of the *DS*); however, even though they are holy men, a group of men this size can certainly encounter other problems.

Elsewhere in the same article quoted above, Calabrese asks the important question: "What does it mean to be a man in the *Decameron*?" (259). Masculinity is portrayed in many ways for both the male *brigata* members and the male characters of the work, and not always as simply an enjoyment of power over the 'weaker sex.' Calabrese further notes: "This 'nature of masculinity' in many medieval Christian texts in

particular often entails navigating the tensions between holiness and manhood, for the continence, reason, and restraint demanded by the former can clash with the robust amatory activity demanded by the latter, both in and out of marriage” (257-58). As we can see from both the stories and the frame narrative of the *Decameron*, it is difficult enough for a single man to restrain himself in the company of a single woman, let alone a man in the company of seven women on an isolated trip into the countryside. One must assume that Dionigi aimed to rectify this ‘problem’ by making his entire *brigata* consist only of men, but if a reader were to undertake the extremely tedious task of reading through all of the *ragionamenti*, he or she would soon realize that the *Decameron* that Dionigi produced was not strengthened by this emendation, only further weakened.

Several Boccaccio scholars agree that a gathering of men, no matter how small—Calabrese even suggests two or more—usually contributes to a climate of aggression or competition. Teodolinda Barolini notes: “Eating together in a group of men, emancipated from female thrift and family economics, is a major social indicator of masculine prestige” (“Sociology of the *Brigata*” 13). While the men of the *DS brigata* are not explicitly aggressive toward each other, their makeup is implicitly aggressive against women: not only do they choose not to invite women along on their trip (a violent departure on behalf of Dionigi from Boccaccio’s text), in doing so, they ensure that no women are present either to hear or respond to their *ragionamenti*, some of which do contain anti-female rhetoric. Dionigi seems to proclaim, albeit indirectly, that the company of women—even on a “spiritual” retreat—leads only to impiety and temptation toward sexual interaction.<sup>240</sup> Thus, the sole premise of being female poses a sexual threat,

---

<sup>240</sup> Is sinning (sexually) seen as inherently female at this time? “Boccaccio has not forgotten that men put upon themselves, and have put upon them, a never ending, infinitely renewed physical demand.

which would repress the men, no matter how holy they may be. However, the men of the *DS brigata* are still repressed, regardless of the absence of females in their small group.

With no females present in the group, there is neither any threat of (physical) sexual violence nor any need to diffuse (hetero)sexual anxiety, as there is in the *Decameron* (albeit passively presented, never explicitly mentioned, and never acted upon). Tobias Gittes observes the way that the *brigata* members deflect their temptations in the Boccaccian text: “Whereas rape would present a threat to the fragile social structure established by the *brigata*, passive forms of erotic enjoyment serve to defuse the danger and reinforce the sense of community” (162). Even when the group finds themselves in the Valle delle Donne, a heavily charged landscape, the women are seen bathing, which seems to have the intent of providing a ‘release’ for the *Decameron*’s intended readers who, unlike Actaeon, are granted permission to commit this type of voyeurism. Although the Boccaccian *brigata* makes it through the entire fifteen-day sojourn without sexual incident, the frame narrative is not free from sexual tension. On the other hand, Dionigi’s *brigata* members do encounter sexual topics during the scope of their *ragionamenti*, but they skirt them expertly. In the Conclusion to Day Eight, Ugone almost begins a discourse on the pleasures of the flesh, but instead folds it neatly into a proposal for the next Day’s theme (“la Santa Patientia”):

There is no doubt, noble gentlemen, that for us to be men of flesh, we take much gratification in the pleasures and comforts of this troublesome and destitute world; and thus tribulations give us much travail and worry when we come upon them; not considering that which the holy Apostles said once, that is, that for various tribulations it behooves us to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. But, as the Doctor of the people, the apostle Paul, said, patience is necessary for us to carry out our promises. It seems to me

---

Nor has he forgotten the gendered hierarchies and the moral continuum that renders these sexual acts weak, immoral, and sinfully ‘female’” (Calabrese, “Male Piety” 265).

that it will not be an inconvenient thing, that if we have spoken of tribulation, that Patience should be the theme of the following day.<sup>241</sup>

To sum up the gender dynamics of Dionigi's *brigata*: they hardly exist, at least not in explicit terms. Marilyn Migiel says of the Boccaccian *brigata*: "The fictional storytellers of the *Decameron* are marked by their gender and by their express views on sexuality and sexual difference."<sup>242</sup> As we can see, however, there is no such marked difference in the *DS*. It would seem that the only place in the *DS* where the *brigata* members display individuality is in the *canzoni* that they sing, and even in that case, the words are heavily impersonal and too laden with biblical references to infer any kind of creativity.

## V. Conclusion

In making his all-male *brigata* hyper-religious, is Dionigi somehow 'de-masculinizing' Boccaccio? By completely removing the men's sexuality (and removing women as characters) he somehow makes the work misogynist and misandrist at the same time. Yet it would be hard to call the work misanthropic; each Day treats a theme that promotes the betterment of the men and their assumed listeners—betterment that is based on a

---

<sup>241</sup> "Non è dubbio alcuno nobilissimi Giovani, che per esser noi huomini di carne, molto ci compiacemo de i piaceri, e de i commodi di questo scommodo mondo, e disagiato; e perciò molto travaglio, e molto fastidio ci arrecano le tribulationi quando le ci vengono; non considerando quel che dissero gli Apostoli santi una volta, cioè, che per varie tribulationi ci bisogna entrare nel regno de i Cieli. Ma come disse il Dottor delle genti Paulo Apostolo, ci è necessaria la patientia per riportar le promesse. Per lo che a me pare, che non sarà sconvenevole cosa, se noi dopo l'haver della tribulatione trattato, della Patientia ragioneremo la seguente giornata" (*DS* VIII, Concl., p. 512).

<sup>242</sup> Qtd. in Grossi, "Anti-Petrarchism in the *Decameron*'s Proem and Introduction?" 10. On the other hand, Dino Cervigni writes: "As further evidence of this principle of equality, gender plays no role, for women and men are appointed queens and kings with no obvious reason for their selection and sequence in holding the rule" (Cervigni, "The *Decameron*'s Ballads" 136). Therefore, gender dynamics among the *brigata* is clearly a contested point among Boccaccio scholars. See also Kirkham, "An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*" 18: "Each narrator, if not a symbol strictly speaking, has symbolic resonance. And taken together, they create a situation charged with allegorical resonance."

Christian (Dominican) way of life and living, and which encourages the men to be as spiritual as possible.

Are religion and masculinity mutually exclusive? It would seem that Dionigi's particular brand of Christianity strips masculinity from its followers, especially his brigata. To claim that Dionigi's *Decameron* "de-masculinizes" Boccaccio's of course assumes that Boccaccio's representation of men (as either characters or narrators, or the authorial presence of Boccaccio himself) is strongly masculine in itself, and can be easily dismantled by applying ascetic religious traits. It is also to assume that Boccaccio, his male characters, and his male narrators all suffer from an acute lack of religion in their lives; however, we know that this is not true. Calabrese argues that Boccaccio de-masculinizes his characters as well:

One could argue that sex and death drive much of the drama of the entire collection, shaping and, at times, dismantling masculinity. Boccaccio never answers the question of what it means to be a man in the *Decameron*, for it could never mean just one thing. Rather, he has dramatized the tensions, anxieties, ambitions, and failings of men as they navigate the often confusing and contradictory demands of spirit and of body, each making its own promise of 'gloria celestiale.'<sup>243</sup>

Neither Boccaccio nor Dionigi seems to represent the 'ideal man' in the period in which they lived. Furthermore, it is unclear whether Dionigi was attempting to create realistic male figures or merely a hagiographical list of modernized saints. Regardless of his intentions, I believe that Dionigi failed in portraying a truly spiritual group, especially regarding how the group discusses women. I will explore these discussions in the following chapter.

---

<sup>243</sup> Calabrese, "Male Piety and Sexuality in the *Decameron*" 272.



## Chapter Four:

### Female Gender and Sexuality in the *DS*: From “lusinghevoli femine” to “nobilissime Donzelle”

#### I. Introduction

The *Decamerone Spirituale* removes all female frame characters and narrators from its macrotext, but female figures are still present (and numerous) in the body of the text and serve to illustrate religious, societal and literary attitudes toward women at this point in the sixteenth century, when the spiritualization ‘movement’ was already well underway. As I have mentioned in the previous two chapters, the *brigata* members of the *DS* correspond directly to the members of the Boccaccian *brigata*; however, although women make up the majority of the Boccaccian *brigata*, there are no traces of femininity among Dionigi’s group. Femininity is all but erased from the macrotext, and in the *ragionamenti* women appear only as exemplary figures, whether serving as warnings against sinful behavior or as paragons of virtue and saintly excellence. Even if some women function as protagonists of stories or parables, these tales are never longer than one or two pages of text and certainly do not span the length of a Boccaccian *novella*; rather, they are folded into a larger *ragionamento* and enveloped in discussion or recitation of religious quotations and commentary.

In this chapter I will flesh out the roles of the women in the *DS*. In particular, I will examine the categories of the women that Dionigi chose to include in the text and their importance, both as individuals and in groups, to the overarching spiritualization genre. Moreover, I will analyze their presence in comparison to that in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and other Boccaccian texts (e.g. the *Corbaccio* and the *Elegia di Madonna*

*Fiammetta*). How does Dionigi's portrayal of women fit into the context of sexuality and censorship of this period? How did the censorship norms of the Counter-Reformation shape the representation of female sexuality in this particular subset of literature (and in literature in general)? How did contemporary female readers and authors react and respond to these texts? I argue that female sexuality, especially regarding virgin saints, was a distinct obsession—even a fetish—for the authors of the spiritualization genre. Dionigi, in particular, heavily favored discussion of female martyrs over male martyrs; he even devoted an entire *sacra rappresentazione* to the life of Saint Christina, which I will examine in the last section of this chapter.

## **II. The Problem of Sexuality in the Counter-Reformation**

As I have shown in previous chapters, the presence of sexuality in a text—regardless of the gender, age, race, or marital status of the characters involved—became one of the primary focuses of censors in the first years of the Counter-Reformation. If a text was classified as *donec expurgetur* or *donec corrigatur* (forbidden from publication unless expurgated or corrected), the next step was to sanitize the text and make it suitable for publication. The easiest way to perform this 'cleansing' of the text was to remove or replace the majority of amorous scenes in the banned literature, which were considered dangerous and unacceptable for all readers; and the easiest way to remedy the presence of the amorous scenes was to remove women altogether. Wholesale removal of women did not happen in every single spiritualized text: in some texts, such as the *Decamerone Spirituale* and the *Petrarcha Spirituale*, women remained present in the text but lost their voice (and thus their agency). Malipiero replaces the figure of Laura with that of the

Virgin Mary; Dionigi goes one step further and replaces the female narrators with men.<sup>244</sup>

Despite Dionigi's 'purifying' efforts, however, there is still a subtext of sexuality and amorous themes in the *DS*: in reality, by naming lustful women and pointing out their behavior, Dionigi (and other spiritualizing authors) actually calls attention to sexuality and keeps it subliminally present. That being said, Dionigi could have left out these figures and their sins entirely; however, this probably would have resulted in a much shorter, even drier text. These figures were essential to his arguments in that they served to accentuate, by contrast, the positive examples of saintly behavior. Furthermore, as I will show in the following sections, sexuality (especially that of a woman) is impossible to erase, even if that woman is a virgin martyr.

One of the reasons women presented such a serious problem in vernacular texts was not their existence in general, but their existence in relation to the men around them. Being in the company of the opposite sex inevitably led to sexual relations; this is why, as I have noted in Chapter 3, the mixed-gender *brigata* was not only improbable, but

---

<sup>244</sup> See Luzzi, "Censura e rinnovamento cattolico nell'età della Controriforma: i travestimenti spirituali del Petrarca e il madrigale" 13: "Nel *Petrarca spirituale* Malipiero infatti riscrive l'intero *Canzoniere* sì da eliminare ciò che era considerato come pericoloso per la salvezza delle anime, secondo lo spirito proprio dell'inquisizione ecclesiastica, e insieme teologico-dottrinale, programmaticamente enunciato nel *Dialogo* premesso ai sonetti e nella *Introduzione* alle canzoni: dai componimenti scompare la figura di Laura, il cui nome viene sostituito con quello della Vergine, e ogni riferimento alla descrizione della persona e del paesaggio, ai luoghi e al contesto storico; l'Amore profano è sostituito con l'Amore sacro di Dio per l'uomo e dell'uomo verso Dio. Dal punto di vista formale Malipiero lascia inalterate le parole-rima intervenendo o rielaborando per intero la parte interna del verso e mantiene per buona parte dei testi anche l'*incipit* o i primi due versi, così da mantenerne la riconoscibilità e la paternità petrarchesca" ["In the *Petrarca spirituale* Malipiero actually rewrites the entire *Canzoniere* so as to eliminate that which was considered dangerous for the salvation of souls, according to the spirit of the ecclesiastical, and also theological-doctrinal, inquisition, programmatically enunciated in the dialogue placed before the sonnets and in the introduction to the songs: from the components the figure of Laura disappears, and her name is replaced with that of the Virgin, and every reference to the description of the person and the landscape, to places and to historical context; profane Love is replaced by the sacred love of God for man and of man toward God. From a formal point of view Malipiero leaves unaltered the poetry, intervening or re-elaborating entirely the internal part of the verse and maintaining for the most part the texts—even the *incipit* or the first two verses, all to maintain the recognizability and the Petrarchan paternity"].

impractical. When a woman is erased from the text, as is common in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rewritings on which I focus, it is clear that the author is attempting to transcend the problem of sexual temptation by removing, and thus denying, her material presence. Dionigi hints at his inspiration for this mindset with his frequent citations of male philosophers such as Saint John Chrysostom, Aristotle, and Saint Augustine, all of whom argued that the female body is not only unequal to the male body, but relatively deficient and able to serve purely physical ends.<sup>245</sup> In biblical society, even in marriage, the body was to be ignored and sex performed “sexlessly,” as it was meant only for reproduction and not for sensuality or pleasure; in fact, the act of engaging in sex for pleasure was seen as a “personal failing of the flesh.” Rape was no exception to this, and more often than not, the woman took the blame and became a pariah. In order to be saintly, or at least maintain one’s purity, a man or woman had to abstain from sex altogether and enter into a metaphysical marriage with Christ. This often required the individual to leave society—most often by entering into a monastery or cloister—so as to avoid distractions (e.g. the temptation to engage with the opposite sex).<sup>246</sup>

---

<sup>245</sup> See Alcuin Blamires, ed., *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* 39-40 (Aristotle), 58-59 (Saint John Chrysostom) and 77-82 (Saint Augustine). Saint John Chrysostom makes lengthy arguments in his Homily IX (on Saint Paul’s Epistle to Timothy) for why women should remain silent in church (“in this way they will show submission,” 59); Aristotle (in *De Generatione Animalium* 728a) writes: “A woman is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of a disability of a sort...” (40).

<sup>246</sup> David Jacobson, *Of Virgins and Martyrs* 25: “In the biblical form of society, the woman is a marker of family boundaries, a symbol of the community, and as such, she is under the control of men—fathers, husbands, and brothers. Even rape and adultery are understood, in this context, as one man’s violation of another man’s possession, or possible possession, of a woman. Rape in this regard is comprehended as a subset of adultery, not an abuse of the woman herself. Consent or consensual relations are not, tellingly, the issue. Nor is it the bodily integrity or autonomy of the woman. Rather, what is operating here is the social structure—and its integrity (literally and morally)—regarding scripted relations among men and women, families, those in positions of influence and their inferiors, and the propagation of family, tribe, and nation.”

Dionigi might have thought that he had removed these ‘distractions’ from his male *brigata* members (even though they were priests, and thus celibate to begin with); however, though females are absent from their company, they are certainly not absent from the *brigata*’s lengthy discourses. Dionigi gives as much attention to female sinners as he does to female saints, and his strange, somewhat lustful descriptions of the saints (almost all of whom are extremely young virgin martyrs) cast doubt on the actual ‘cleanliness’ of the rewritten text. Likewise, other spiritualizing authors claim to have written ‘spiritual’ and ‘expurgated’ texts, but also train a heavily voyeuristic gaze on the accounts of martyrdoms of female saints in a way that they do not do for male characters, saintly or not. If these spiritualizations, which purport to excise the harmful (i.e. sexual) material from the original works from which they draw inspiration, still focus on the sexuality of women so strongly, can they be considered truly spiritual? Before I answer this question, I will take into consideration both the main ‘problem text’ at hand (the *Decameron*) and its contemporary female readers and critics—both the ones imagined by Boccaccio and the real ones who penned reactions to his work.

## **II.1 Female Readers of, and Reactions to, ‘Problem Texts’**

By the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, there was a much higher presence of women in literature, intellectual culture and academies; in fact, it was the highest point of their integration into the literary culture of the period.<sup>247</sup> Some women writers tended toward genres such as pastoral dramas and religious poetry, while others ventured into religious epics and lengthy treatises arguing for recognition of the

---

<sup>247</sup> See Virginia Cox’s works, especially *A Short History of the Italian Renaissance* (especially the chapter entitled “Renaissance Women,” 167-205), *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance*, and *Women’s Writing in Italy, 1400–1650*.

intellectual worth of women. Many of these were written in response to Boccaccio (especially to the *Decameron*)—for instance, Marguerite de Navarre’s (1492–1549) *Heptameron* (published in 1558) and Lucrezia Marinella’s (1571–1653) *La nobiltà et Eccellenza delle donne* (1601). The latter’s objective, stated clearly on the title page, was to “destroy the opinion of Boccaccio” and other writers (especially Giuseppe Passi and his 1599 work *I donneschi difetti*) regarding their disparaging remarks on the nobility of women.<sup>248</sup> Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–52) wrote a treatise entitled *Che le donne siano della spezie degli uomini* (“That Women are No Less Rational Than Men,” 1651), which was a response not to Boccaccio’s portrayal of women but to an anonymous treatise published four years prior arguing the opposite of her treatise’s title (*Che le donne non siano della spezie degli uomini*, 1647). Titles such as these, in addition to the many imitations of male authors’ style by women in poetry and prose, indicate that women were not only prolific writers but were also active readers and critics of both contemporary and ancient literature at this time.

Apart from these published responses, we do not know much more about the reactions of contemporary female readers to the *Decameron*.<sup>249</sup> We can only imagine or fabricate the reactions of female readers through how men address them in the text: the

---

<sup>248</sup> The full description of the first part reads: “Nella prima [parte] si manifesta la nobiltà delle Donne co’ forti ragioni, & infiniti essempli, & non solo si distrugge l’opinione del Boccaccio, d’amendue i Tassi, dello Sperone, di Monsig. di Namur, & del Passi, ma d’Aristotile il grande anchora” [“In the first part one manifests the nobility of Women with strong reasons and infinite examples, and not only does one destroy the opinion of Boccaccio, and of both Tassos, of Sperone, of Monsignor di Namur, and of [Giuseppe] Passi, but also of the still-great Aristotle”] (Marinella, n.p.).

<sup>249</sup> See Mihoko Suzuki, “Gender, Power, and the Female Reader: Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron*” 234: “We do not have access to these [female] readers’ reactions to or interpretations of the [Griselda] story, for few women during this period commented on texts in writing, or if they did, succeeded in circulating them among a public audience.”

ideal female reader is a construct, one that both male authors and male characters in the text seek to control.<sup>250</sup> Kristina Olson writes:

As much as [reading the vernacular as solely feminine] speaks to the historical tension inherent in composing in the vernacular, it also masks the result of the linguistic metamorphosis inherent in the male author's craft, who transforms these feminized vessels of form, these *parole*, into the eroticized content of desire. The authors of those texts—the *fatti* themselves—are men who fashion the vernacular as feminine, but who cannot utterly transpose the social and artistic exchange of *parole* to an exclusively feminine world.<sup>251</sup>

The “convergence of language and gender” in Boccaccio's oeuvre has been treated by various scholars in the last few decades, including Olson, Barolini, Regina Psaki, and Robert Hollander, to name a few; much of this scholarship focuses on the dichotomy between *parole* and *fatti*, wherein female characters embody the *parole* (words) and men, the *fatti* (deeds).<sup>252</sup>

While it is true that Boccaccio dedicates the entire work to “ladies in love” in his Introduction, many scholars disagree as to whether this dedication (and the *Decameron* as a whole) is benevolent toward women, given the misogynistic nature of many of the tales.<sup>253</sup> Within the text, the female members of the *brigata* often do not respond to tales in which a woman is beaten, tricked or otherwise victimized; sometimes, as Mihoko

---

<sup>250</sup> Suzuki 232: “The woman—as character in the stories, as teller and audience in the frame, and as reader of the *Decameron*—becomes a figure, like the feminine Fortuna, that the male writer and the male protagonist seek to control.”

<sup>251</sup> Olson, “The Language of Women as Written by Men: Boccaccio, Dante and Gendered Histories of the Vernacular” 74.

<sup>252</sup> See, for example: Olson, op. cit.; Barolini, “*Le parole son femmine e i fatti sono maschi*: Toward a Sexual Politics of the *Decameron* (*Decameron* II 10)””; Psaki, “Giving them the Bird: Figurative Language and the ‘Woman Question’ in the *Decameron* and the *Corbaccio*”; Idem, “The Play of Genre and Voicing in Boccaccio's *Corbaccio*”; and Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction: 'Il Corbaccio'*.

<sup>253</sup> See, in addition to Suzuki and Olson, Laura Di Sisto, “Boccaccio Friend or Foe? An Examination of the Role of Women in the *Decameron*.”

Suzuki notes, they even respond to these tales with laughter.<sup>254</sup> Joy Potter agrees that a clearly misogynistic (or at least overwhelmingly anti-female) attitude runs through the whole Boccaccian *brigata*, not just in the men: “The statements made on the matter by the *cornice* protagonists are clearly in tune with the basically misogynist attitude of the times. They are in fact so strong as to set up a decided tension within the work between the female roles in the frame tale and in some of the stories depicting strong and noble-minded women, and the attitudes prescribed by the ten young people themselves” (“Woman in the *Decameron*” 90).<sup>255</sup> In fact, at times it is the women in the *brigata* who posit the most misogynistic views and textual or cultural references—Potter draws our attention to Filomena’s allusion to a letter from Saint Paul to the Ephesians in the Introduction to the *Decameron*, a sentiment that “brings in the authority of religion to

---

<sup>254</sup> “As for the female readers, Boccaccio and to a somewhat lesser extent Dioneo attempt to humor and placate them in order to seduce them into accepting such misogynous tales; Boccaccio accomplishes this seduction by having the female audience in the frame laugh at these stories, rather than acknowledge women’s victimization as such” (Suzuki 236).

<sup>255</sup> Luigi Surdich suggests that the women in the *brigata* both confirm and reinforce this hierarchy: “La libertà, l’autonomia, l’avanzata emancipazione di molte figure femminili delle novelle, fino al pronunciato femminismo di cui è rappresentante Ghismonda, sono attutiti e ridimensionati, al livello di cornice, attraverso un’abile operazione che, se riconosce il peso e l’importanza delle donne nella società (loro sono le destinatarie del libro, loro sono in netta maggioranza nel numero dei componenti della brigata), in realtà stabilisce una gerarchia nella quale la donna è in posizione subalterna rispetto all’uomo: e tale posizione è riconosciuta e accettata dalle donne stesse, sia quando ritengono indispensabile la presenza degli uomini nella brigata ... sia quando, per voce di Emilia, a introduzione di IX 9, viene esposta una riflessione sul ruolo della donna ... Il Boccaccio, insomma, non fa della cornice e delle novelle distinti modelli in concorrenza. La funzione modellizzante è affidata esclusivamente alla brigata dei dieci giovani, la gestione ideologica del *Decameron* spetta a loro” [“The liberty, autonomy, and advanced emancipation of many female figures in the *novelle*, until the pronounced feminism of which Ghismonda is representative, are softened and re-dimensioned at the level of the cornice, through an able operation that, if it recognizes the weight and importance of the women in society (they are the recipients of the book, they are in a clear majority of the number of components of the *brigata*), in reality it establishes a hierarchy in which the woman is in a subordinate position in respect to the man: and such a position is recognized and accepted by the women themselves, both when they take the presence of men in the *brigata* to be indispensable ... and when, in the words of Emilia in the introduction to IX.9, a reflection is made on the role of the woman ... Boccaccio, therefore, does not make distinct models of his cornice and of the *novelle* in concurrence. The modeling function is entrusted exclusively to the *brigata* of the ten youths; the ideological management of the *Decameron* is up to them”] (*La cornice di amore* 245-46).



reenforce [*sic*] woman's inferiority" (91).<sup>256</sup> Elsewhere, Lauretta remarks on the frailty and fickleness of women and their inability to control their emotions.<sup>257</sup>

As for the very last *novella* in the *Decameron* (the tale of Griselda), we have access to some responses by contemporary male readers, a few of which are available thanks to Petrarch, who describes the reactions of his friends to his Latin translation of the story in a letter to Boccaccio. Suzuki writes: "In translating the story into Latin, Petrarch completely drops Boccaccio's pretense that the story is intended for female readers ... he also describes the reactions of the male readers among whom he circulated the story. Thus Petrarch's letter [*Seniles* XVI, 3] clearly documents the ways in which male writers (Boccaccio, Petrarch), and male readers (Petrarch, the auditors of his recital, and the readers of his translation) exchanged the story of Griselda among themselves" (Suzuki 234). As difficult as it is to find reactions by women to the Griselda tale, it is harder still to find female reactions to Petrarch's re-telling of it.

### III. Female Gender and Sexuality in the *Decameron* and in the *DS*

In the *Decameron*, according to Laura Di Sisto, only 32 of the 100 (or 100.5) tales show a female character in a central role.<sup>258</sup> Joy Potter further notes that 22 of the *novelle* do not

---

<sup>256</sup> The biblical text reads: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (Ephesians 5:23).

<sup>257</sup> See, for example, IV.3.5-6: "E come che questo sovente negli uomini avvenga, e più in uno che in un altro, nondimeno già con maggior danni s'è nelle donne veduto, per ciò che più leggiermente in quelle s'accende e ardevi con fiamma più chiara e con meno rattenimento le sospigne. Né è di ciò maraviglia, per ciò che, se raguadar vorremo, vedremo che il fuoco di sua natura più tosto nelle leggiere e morbide cose s'apprende che nelle dure e più gravanti; e noi pur siamo (non l'abbiano gli uomini a male) più delicate che essi non sono e molto più mobili" ["Which, though it not seldom befall men, and one rather than another, has nevertheless been observed to be fraught in women with more disastrous consequences, inasmuch as in them the flame is both more readily kindled, and burns more brightly, and with less impediment to its vehemence. Wherein is no cause to marvel, for, if we consider it, we shall see that 'tis of the nature of fire to lay hold more readily of things light and delicate than of matters of firmer and more solid substance; and sure it is that we (without offense to the men be it spoken) are more delicate than they, and much more mobile"] (translation from *DecameronWeb*).

feature women at all (“Woman in the *Decameron*” 93). Many critics agree that the majority of women in the *Decameron* (and also in Boccaccio’s minor works) serve no role in the text other than to be objects of sexual desire, making a further point for the text’s perceived misogynistic quality.<sup>259</sup> Joseph Grossi maintains (and Ray Fleming agrees) that, even in the many instances where Boccaccio seems to be portraying his female characters as liberated, enamored women, these are merely promptings of literary discussions between other male authors.<sup>260</sup> In fact, according to Fleming, “much of the Western canonical tradition of literature is a homoerotic tradition in which men use women both to construct the notion of masculine gender and to establish male identity,” and this should not surprise readers, seeing how woman represents both “the sacred and profane site of both desire and prohibition” in the same canon (35-36).

However problematic Boccaccio’s text is regarding female agency, he does not silence his female characters entirely (at least, not to the degree that Dionigi does); still, it does happen in a few instances in the *Decameron*. As Ray Fleming observes, “Freud implies in his essay, ‘Das Motive der Kästchenwahl,’ that in the Western tradition of both

---

<sup>258</sup> Di Sisto continues: “However, in 40 of these, women are important only as objects of lust or love. There are no women characters in the first three stories of both the first and tenth days and, interestingly, two of the most licentious tales in the whole *Decameron* (the Masetto and Alibech stories) are told by men. Also missing are stories that show female friendship or only female protagonists. Out of the whole 100 novelle only two women, Zinevra (II, 9) and Giletta di Norbona (III, 9), manage to hold their own in the world of men. However, at the end of their adventures marriage and contented wifedom are what they both settle into” (“Boccaccio Friend or Foe?” 67).

<sup>259</sup> See: Henri Hauvette, *Boccace: Étude biographique et littéraire* (qtd. in Castiglia 44n8); Ignazio Castiglia, *Il labirinto d’amore: Istanze morali e ragioni artistiche nel ‘Corbaccio’ di Giovanni Boccaccio* 52; Di Sisto, *op. cit.* 63; and Tobias Foster Gittes, “Boccaccio’s Valley of Women” 148.

<sup>260</sup> Grossi, “Anti-Petrarchism in the *Decameron*’s Proem and Introduction?” 20-22: “In veering away from verisimilitude, the Introduction further reminds us that the *Decameron* is at least as much about literary discussions between male writers as it is about real-life women ... In showing at least fictional women enjoying liberty, the Introduction suggests more tellingly than the Proem does that real-life men, especially male poets in the throes of love, can do so as well ... If a reformist impetus lay behind the *Decameron*, it was one that sought not to increase the rights of women but to expand the possibilities of literary form.”

myth and literature the silent woman is often a symbol of death” (35). Valeria Finucci adds that feminine silence can also be seen as a sign of chastity: that is, “the closed mouth stands for a social exigency (she who doesn’t speak, doesn’t sin)” (*The Lady Vanishes* 53). Every woman who appears in the *Decameron* has a voice that is constructed, once through the mouth of the narrator of that story, and once again by the pen of Boccaccio. No matter how much agency a woman shows in the story, she is not her own person; she is, as Finucci observes, a “recreated other, [who] can do nothing more than narcissistically mirror the heterosexual desires of the group that creates her” (53). The silence of Alatiel in II.7 is said to be linked to her loss of chastity: “...and even when she is with her last two lovers, who speak her language, Boccaccio leaves her silent ... When she returns to speech she reacquires her individuality and humanity” (Potter, “Woman in the *Decameron*” 97).

The female characters in the *Decamerone Spirituale* do not have the privilege of being filtered through the words of female narrators. The group of men who narrate these women is, per Dionigi’s Introduction, “spiritual”; Dionigi does not mention either in the Introduction or in the Proem whether they have wives or children, so the reader assumes that they are all celibate and that their relationship with one another is purely homosocial. The women featured in this text do not serve (as they appear largely to do in the *Decameron*) as sexual objects meant for male consumption.<sup>261</sup> Instead, they serve to illustrate ideals of good women and examples of bad women. The Virgin Mary appears

---

<sup>261</sup> Finucci adds: “The usual (false) triangular, heterosexual relationship involving two men and a woman reveals in the end the (true) binary relationship of one man with another man. This is the very paradigm that Freud analyzed and atomized in his theory of the dirty joke. Although woman is ostensibly the main character in the joke-work, her position there is to advance, by means of her presence, the homosocial strategy of those telling tales about her. This inevitably leads to her being expurgated from the text, unless of course, desexualized and normativized, she is willing to accept the role of intermediary” (95). Given that women are removed as intermediators in the *DS*, they are reduced even further.

frequently as the paragon of virtue, and the men worship her ardently. Other categories of women include (virgin) saints and martyrs (e.g. Christina, Lucy, Agatha), women in the Bible (e.g. Bathsheba, Susanna, Delilah), historical figures (e.g. Humbeline, the sister of St. Bernard; Queen Radegunde of France; Cleopatra; Xanthippe, a wife of Socrates), random characters from stories or parables, and mythological figures (e.g. Ceres, Venus, Helen of Troy, the Tiburtine and Erythraean Sibyls, and various nymphs and dryads).<sup>262</sup>

One of the more noteworthy parts of the *Decameron* concerning female sexuality is Boccaccio's Introduction to Day Four. As it constitutes one of three instances in the *Decameron* where the author speaks directly to his readers in his own voice, it presents a unique shift in the already complicated narrative structure of the work. Because of this, many Boccaccio scholars consider the Introduction to Day Four to be another *novella* in itself (or at least half of one), bringing the total number of *Decameron novelle* to 100.5. The "novelletta delle papere," which it is commonly called, is the story of a man and his young son, whom he has raised in a cave, sheltered from the outside world. Upon exiting the cave and venturing into the nearby town, the son sees a group of women and asks the father what they are called; the father responds that they are *papere*, or geese.<sup>263</sup>

In the exact same position in the *DS*—the Introduction to Day Four—Dionigi breaks his pattern of copying Boccaccio's macrotext and does not insert his own voice into the text. He narrates the beginning of the Day in the usual manner, in which the

---

<sup>262</sup> See Appendix D for a full table of names of women who appear in the *DS*. Other instances of female figures appearing in the text of the *DS*, though rare, include personifications of virtues: for example, at the end of the Third Day, when the men are served by "due bellissime, e nobilissime Donzelle" who are actually "la Parsimonia" and "la Sobrietà santa" (*DS* III Concl., p. 214).

<sup>263</sup> For more on naming and gender and sexuality in this *novelletta*, see, among others: Myra Best, "La peste e le papere: Textual Repression in Day Four of the *Decameron*"; Federico Sanguineti, "La Novelletta delle papere nel *Decameron*"; Simone Marchesi, *Stratigrafie Decameroniane*; and Luigi Surdich, "Tradizione, riuso e modificazione della metafora erotica nella novellistica postdecameroniana."

*brigata* members awaken to the sounds of the nature surrounding them; however, on this day, the men hear a different noise: the songs of two birds, the *rondinella* (swallow) and the *filomena* (nightingale). Dionigi writes: “The roaming Swallow, seeing the new light of the coming Sun, sweetly chirping, told its misfortunes to the people, and in the nearby deep valleys her pained sister Nightingale wept of the brazen temerity of her brother-in-law; when the devout *brigata* arose and gathered together, they awaited the hour and the last signal to go and see the immaculate Lamb of God be sacrificed on the altar of the sacred Priest” (*DS IV Intr.*, p. 216).<sup>264</sup>

Aside from the obvious connection between the bird *filomena* and the *Decameron* narrator Filomena, the use of this particular bird in the text, especially when paired with the *rondinella*, has darker implications. The myth of Procne, Philomela and Tereus, which appears in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Book VI, 401-674), is a violent tale of rape and mutilation:

The story is that Tereus married Procne daughter of King Pandion of Attica, begot a son, Itys, on her, then concealed her in the country in order to be able to marry her sister Philomela. He told her that Procne was dead, and when she learned the truth cut out her tongue so that she should not be able to tell anyone. But she embroidered some letters on a peplum, which enabled Procne to be found in time. Procne returned and in revenge for her ill-treatment killed her son Itys, whom she laid on a dish before Tereus. Tereus had meanwhile attended an oracle which told him that Itys would be murdered, and suspecting that his brother Dryas was the destined murderer, had killed him. The sisters then fled, Tereus caught up an axe, and the gods changed them all into birds: Procne became a *swallow*, Philomela a *nightingale*, Tereus a hoopoe.<sup>265</sup>

---

<sup>264</sup> “La Rondinella peregrina, appressandosi la nuova luce del vicino Sole, dolcemente garrendo, i suoi infortuni palesava alle genti, e già per le vicine valli profonde la sua dolente sorella Filomena la sfacciata temerità piangeva del suo cognato; quando levatasi la devota brigata, & insieme tutta raccolta, l’hora, e l’ultimo segno aspettavano per dover’ire à veder sacrificare l’immacolato Agnello Christo sopra l’altare dal santo Sacerdote.”

<sup>265</sup> Graves, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* 362-63n1; italics mine.

Dionigi's reference to this myth is subtle, but important. Having removed all of the women narrators, and having replaced all of the female characters in the microtext with speechless figures, he has silenced the female voice much as Tereus silenced Philomela. Of course, this silencing is much less violent than in the myth, but it is still obstructive and exclusionary. In the *Decameron*, the nightingale also appears, but in a much different setting: the *novella* of the *lusignuolo* (V.4) is explicitly sexual in nature, as the word nightingale is used as a euphemism for male genitalia. Other birds are mentioned in the *Decameron*, but are not always representative of women or sexuality.<sup>266</sup> The dove appears in the *DS* when Crisippo quotes (very loosely) from chapter 2 of the Song of Solomon (the marginal note reads "Cant. c.2."): "Wherein, in the Canticle the husband, that is to say Christ, exhorts the wife, that is to say the holy, contemplative soul, saying; Rise, hurry, my friend, my dove, my beautiful, and come; as he openly said; Rise, hurry, my friend, for love and for faith; my dove, for innocence and simplicity; my beautiful, for virtue, and for Chastity."<sup>267</sup>

### III.1 The Relationship Between Women and Men in the *DS*

The relationship of the women in the *DS* to men is one of submission, obedience, and passivity. If, as Mihoko Suzuki suggests, both Boccaccio and his male *brigata* members

---

<sup>266</sup> Birds in the *Decameron* include nightingales (V.4, VI.10), geese (Intro. to Day IV), cranes (VI.4), falcons (seen in numerous tales, but most famously V.9), hawks, eagles, doves, sparrows (and sparrow-hawks), among others. A good source on the presence of birds in Italian literature is a 2005 doctoral dissertation by Teresa Gualtieri, entitled "Birds of Prey and the Sport of Falconry in Italian Literature through the Fourteenth Century: from Serving Love to Served for Dinner."

<sup>267</sup> "Onde nella Cantica lo sposo, cioè Christo, essorta la sposa, cioè la sant'anima contemplativa, dicendo; Lievati, affrettati, amica mia, *colomba* mia, bella mia, e vieni; come s'apertamente dicesse; Lievati, affrettati amica mia per l'amore, e per la fede; *colomba* mia per l'innocenza, e per la semplicità; bella mia per la virtù, e per la Castità" (*DS* III.3, p. 175; italics mine).

(namely Dioneo) fantasize about having male omnipotence, Dionigi's text goes even further into this fantasy, even using female figures in the text as instruments of spiritual pedagogy. In the *Decameron*, Dioneo's comments regarding women are among the most disparaging and reveal, according to Suzuki, that he finds female sexuality to be "threatening."<sup>268</sup> Apart from his narration of the Griselda tale—interpreted in many ways by many scholars, but mostly in a negative light—some of Dioneo's passing remarks do bear a resemblance to passages in the *DS* where relationships between men and women are concerned. Consider, for example, the story of Pietro di Vinciolo (*Dec.* V.10), in which Dioneo's narration features an old woman complaining that "Now with men 'tis otherwise: they are born meet for a thousand uses, not for this alone; and the more part of them are of much greater consequence in old age than in youth: but women are fit for nought but this, and 'tis but for that they bear children that they are cherished" (V.10.18).<sup>269</sup>

In the *DS*, almost every sin is described either as the 'mother' or 'daughter' of another sin, and virtues are frequently given female attributes as well.<sup>270</sup> This is

---

<sup>268</sup> See Suzuki 233. Even Griselda, the paragon of purity and humility in the *Decameron*, is not safe: "Dioneo all but erases her sexuality ... This fantasy involves the taming of the unruly woman; Griselda's repeated humiliation shows how great the threat of that unruly woman must be" (234). Dionigi perpetuates this fantasy by erasing the speaking woman altogether. Suzuki argues that Boccaccio has done this as well "by having [the female narrators] tell stories from a clearly masculine perspective or by having them acquiesce to the telling of misogynist stories" (247).

<sup>269</sup> "[d]egli uomini non avvien così: essi nascono buoni a mille cose, non pure a questa ... ma le femine a niuna altra cosa che a fare questo e figliuoli ci nascono, e per questo son tenute care" (translation from *DecameronWeb*).

<sup>270</sup> See, for example, *DS* V.8, p. 322: "O Povertà santa; santa madre de i nostri commodi, e delle nostr'utilità. Io non mi so imaginare perche tu para così brutta a gli huomini, e così difforme. Tu non sei già macchiata, e sozza dalle brutture della puzzolente lussuria; Tu non sei già fetida dall'opere della superbia; dell'invidia; dell'accidia; dell'avaritia; dell'ira, e della gola" ["O holy Poverty; holy mother of our comforts, and of our utilities. I cannot imagine why you seem so ugly to men, and so deformed. You are not already soiled, and dirtied from the eyesores of the malodorous lust; You are not already fetid from the works of pride; of envy; of sloth; of greed; of wrath, and of gluttony"].

especially prevalent in discussions pertaining to Lust in Day One, in which the *brigata* members discuss the sin itself as inherently feminine (both in terms of gender of the word *Lussuria* and in its connotation of female culpability, despite the masculine word for sin, *peccato*). What is interesting is that, according to Dionigi, women do not always bear the full brunt of responsibility for these sins; at some points in the text he places the burden on fathers and husbands:

Oh, how often do I find myself amazed and stupefied, that Fathers of the family, husbands, and all other men are so devoid of judgment, they who have young Women at home and [on] whom they let loose these old, wise ribaldries, these sensual young women, and these sanctimonious hypocrites, infernal bellows of the Devil that ignite in their daughters, wives, sisters, and other young women the fire of Lust, that does nothing in the end if not causes often the death of men, steals the honor from houses and from noble and honored families, and (that which matters most of all these things) kills the soul of spiritual death, where, if they have lived chastely in virginity they will be similar to Angels in the realm of paradise, [but] having lived lasciviously according to dishonest counsel and petulant persuasions from these demons from the abyss, of these evil, ribald old women, they are made similar to Demons for deformity, for blackness, and for the stink, suffering with them those torments in Hell, that no dressing of this flesh can think, intend, or understand.<sup>271</sup>

Dionigi writes frequently on the topic of male responsibility over women in the *DS*.

Fathers and husbands are not only responsible for the sins of their daughters and wives, they also have (almost) full control over the way in which the women in their house

---

<sup>271</sup> “O quanto, e quante volte mi son meco stesso con istupore meravigliato, che siano così privi di giudicio i Padri di famiglia, i mariti, e gli altri tutti, c’hanno giovani Donne in casa, e che vi lassino praticare queste sagaci vecchie ribalde, queste feminette sensali, e queste spigoliste picchiapetto, mantici del Diavolo infernale per accendere, e nelle figliuole, e nelle mogli, e nelle sorelle, e nell’altre giovani donne questo fuoco della Lussuria, ch’altro alla fine non fa, se non, che cagiona sovente la morte de gli huomini, ruba l’honore delle Casate, e dalle famiglie nobili, & honorate, e qualche più importa di tutte queste cose, uccide l’anima di morte spirituale, e dove, se in verginità havessero vivuto castamente sariano state simili a gli Angioli della patria del paradiso, havendo vivuto lascivamente secondo i dishonesti consigli, e le petulanti persuasioni di questi mantici d’abisso, di queste scelerate vecchie ribalde, sono fatte simili à i Demoni per la difformità, per la negrezza, e per la puzza, patendo con loro quei tormenti in inferno, che niuno vestito di questa carne può pensare, intendere, ò capire” (*DS* I.7, p. 60).



practice certain deeds of charity—even, for example, almsgiving (*l'elemosina*). In a particularly long passage of text, Dionigi explains that, while a woman is certainly able to practice *elemosina* without the permission of her husband (“Puo far l’elemosina senza la volontà del marito la donna”), there are a staggering number of criteria she must follow in order to maintain her honor and propriety while doing so. Those women who do not follow these guidelines, and who bring infamy to themselves during the practice of almsgiving, fasting, or praying, are “detestable” and “dishonorable”:

These young women doing these services, oftentimes enter in strict counsel with the other, that of almsgiving, of fasting, of praying, and if they also pray, they pray against the honesty of who hears them, and in much dishonor to the naughty husbands, who do not watch who it is that practices in their houses. It is that many times that which they should give to the poor for love of Christ, is given badly, and worse, is given to infamous sensual people, and to evil masters of insatiable and detestable libido. O miserable husbands, o unhappy fathers, o reviled brothers and spouses; remove from your house these boorish, ribald women ... Do not be merely content that your wives practice holy almsgiving to the true poor of Christ, but command them that they do it, and that they be courteous, and full of Christian charity with those who need it.<sup>272</sup>

Again we can see that, although these women are the “detestable” ones, the disgrace also falls upon the men who must control them.<sup>273</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> “Quali femminette questi servigi facendo, soventi hore entrano con loro in istretto consiglio d’altro, che d’elemosine, di digiuni, e d’orationi, e se pur’orano, orano contra l’honestà di chi l’ascolta, e in molto dishonore de’ mariti cattivelli, che non guardano chi siano quelle che praticano nelle lor case. Si che molte volte quel che devriano dare a i poveri per amor di Christo, è dato malamente, e pessimamente dispensato a infami sensali, e a scelerate maestre d’insatiabile libidine, e detestabile. O miserelli mariti, ò infelici Padri, ò vituperati fratelli, e congiunti; levatevi di casa queste gaglioffe, e queste ribalde ... Non solo siate contenti, che le vostre mogli del vostro facciano l’elemosina santa a i veri poverelli di Christo; ma comandate loro che la facciano, e che siano cortesi, e piene di christiana carità con coloro, che n’hanno bisogno” (*DS* VII.8, pp. 436-37).

<sup>273</sup> In her article “La condizione della donna a Fano: Proposte per un’indagine storica,” Anna Falcioni observes that in the *DS*, Dionigi presents the following attitude toward women: “Gli appetiti sessuali femminili erano ritenuti maggiori e incontrollabili rispetto a quelli dell’uomo e la loro infedeltà

One of the most frequently-occurring adjectives accompanying the word *donna* (or *femina*) in the *DS* is *lusinghevole*, which roughly translates to tempting, cajoling, flattering or seductive in English.<sup>274</sup> The word appears many times in the *DS*, and usually among a litany of disparaging rants against society, particularly women. For example, in *ragionamento* V.5, in which the *brigata* “reasons on the contempt of the world and of its fallacious riches” (“...si ragiona del dispregio del mondo, e delle sue fallaci ricchezze”), Chrisogono states: “But how can one overcome the world, which proudly makes rude he who cannot overcome the sweet-talker and the adulterer? This world cajoles and caresses, promising pleasing and delightful things; but it threatens pain, misery and travails, and he who does not disdain its caresses and lies and misguided lures cannot win and overcome its threats” (306).<sup>275</sup> We also find the word in I.5 when Cirillo asks, “Who will be, then, holy enough to surpass the sanctity of David and defend himself in the face of seductive women?” (“Chi sarà, adunque, così santo, che superi la santità di Davide, e si difenda nel veder le lusinghevoli femine?”) (44).

## IV.2 Virginity and Martyrdom in the *DS*

As stated before, the Virgin Mary is the paragon of saintly excellence in the *DS*. She functions as a model for grace and humility and, most importantly, represents womanhood and chastity. While most women who appear in the *DS* serve as either good

---

annullava la certezza della procreazione” [“Female sexual appetites were seen as larger and uncontrollable in respect to those of men and their infidelity annulled the certainty of procreation”] (9).

<sup>274</sup> The word *lusinghe* appears three times in the *Divine Comedy*: *Inf.* XI.58; *Inf.* XVIII.125, and *Purg.* I.92.

<sup>275</sup> “Ma come puo superare il mondo, che fieramente s’incrudelisce colui, che no’l puo superare lusinghero [*sic*], & adulatore? Lusinga; & accarezza questo mondo, promettendo cose soavi, e dilettevoli; mà minaccia etiandio dolori, affanni, e travagliò e chi non disprezza le sue carezze, e le sue bugiarde, e mentite lusinghe; non puo etiandio vincere, e superare le sue minacce.”

or bad examples, Mary Magdalene is both: she was, according to Dionigi, both a great sinner and a great penitent, and deserved to be pardoned for her shameful sins:

And among women do we not find that there were sinners, and great sinners; and also because they were largely penitent, they deserved to be pardoned of their errors, and they were absolved of their sins in that, from vessels of shame and disgrace, they were made vessels of Glory in the supreme court of Heaven? Was not Mary Magdalene a sinner? She was a sinner, and she was a public sinner, that is discovered to be a sinner because she was, as the Gospel says, a sinner in the city. She did penance for her sins, she loved Christ most cordially, and in the house of the Pharisee she washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed them with her mouth, and doused them with precious oil ... And she, having walked the wrong road for so long, searching for the correct path and the good road, aligned herself to Christ not by the head, but by the feet.<sup>276</sup>

The reader can see that, while Dionigi claims to showcase Mary Magdalene as a good example for women to follow, he accentuates her past sins more than he does her status as a reformed woman. She, as a former prostitute, was a woman who used her body as a “vas[o] di vergogna, e di vituperio” (“vessel of shame, and of dishonor”) which was later made into a “vas[o] di Gloria” in Heaven—regardless of her status as a sinner or as a repentant, glorified woman, she is still described primarily as a *vaso* (vessel), prioritizing her body over her biography.<sup>277</sup>

---

<sup>276</sup> “E fra le donne non troviamo noi, che vi furono delle peccatrici, e grandemente peccatrici; e pur perche furono anche grandemente penitenti, meritavano d’essere perdonate de i loro errori, e furono loro rimessi i lor peccati intanto, che di vasi di vergogna, e di vituperio, furono poi fatti vasi di Gloria nella corte superna del Cielo? Non fu peccatrice Maria Maddalena? Fu peccatrice, e fu peccatrice publica, cioè scoperta peccatrice perche era come dice l’Evangelista, peccatrice nella Città. Fece penitenza de i suoi peccati, amò cordialissimamente Christo, e in casa del Fariseo gli lavò con le lagrime i piedi, gli asciuttò co i capelli, gli baciò con la bocca, e gli unse con l’unguento pretioso ... E quella, che lungo tempo haveva malamente caminato, cercando il diritto sentiero, e la buona strada, non al capo, ma a i piedi s’accostò di Christo” (*DS* I.10, p. 84).

<sup>277</sup> It is important to consider that Saint Paul is also referred to as a “vessel” (*vas electionis*), or a chosen instrument, in Acts 9:15. This reference is also seen in the *Divine Comedy*, both in *Inf.* II.28ff

A name that is almost as frequently recurring as Mary in the *DS* is Christina, or, more specifically, “Christina di Tiro d’Italia”, a saint who was martyred as a young girl (and more importantly, for Dionigi, as a virgin). In the *DS*, Christina represents one of the highest examples of patience and is strongly lauded for this virtue on the Ninth Day, in which the *brigata* members focus their *ragionamenti* around the theme of “Santa Patientia.” Panfilo in IX.2 describes Christina’s patience as a “suffering with great strength,” seeing that she tolerated countless agonizing torments as a girl of only 11 years:

You will read of the indefatigable patience that Christina, most holy young virgin, had during her many harsh and important torments, which she suffered under three most atrocious and impious tyrants in Tyre, now called Bolsen[a]; you will read, and you will say, full of wonder and even stupor, how did she have so much patience, and how did she suffer with such strength so many grave, acerbic and, I’d say, almost insufferable torments, a tender girl of only eleven years? The more she suffered, the more she had patience, and the more she tolerated the canings, the prisons, the slaps, the hooks, the wheel, the fire, the fracturing of bones, the fall into a lake; the more she suffered with patience being called witch, sorceress, enchantress; that she was put in a blazing furnace; that she had venomous serpents attack her tender breast (just as they attacked Cleopatra); that, in order to humiliate her, had her hair cut off; that from her delicate little body her virgin breasts were torn off; that her tongue was cut off, and (oh, rare and singular example of undefeated patience in the tender, and delicate breast of a simple little virgin) that she was ultimately shot with arrows by the impious adulators of idols, and in the middle of those shots she rendered her pure and innocent spirit into the hands of her celestial spouse, our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>278</sup>

---

(“Andovvi poi lo Vas d’elezione”) and *Par.* XXI.127ff (“Venne Cefàs e venne il gran vasello / de lo Spirito Santo...”).

<sup>278</sup> “Leggete l’invittissima patientia che Christina, santissima verginella, hebbe nei suoi tanti gravissimi, & importantissimi tormenti, ch’ella sofferse sotto tre atrocissimi tiranni spietati in Tiro d’Italia, c’hoggi si chiama Bolseno; leggete dico, che pieni di maraviglia, e di stupore altresì, direte, Com’hebbe tanta patientia, e come sofferse con tanta virtù d’animo tanti, e tanto gravi, acerbi, e dirò quasi insopportabili tormenti, una tenerissima giovanetta d’undici anni solamente? Pur gli sofferse, pur’hebbe patientia, e pur tolerò le verghe, le prigioni, le gotate, gli uncini, la ruota, il fuoco, la confrattione dell’ossa,

Christina's patience is described twice in this passage as "invittissima" (unbeaten or undefeated). According to legend, her cruel father, Urbano, sent her to be judged by three different judges in the city of Tiro. These judges tortured Christina for being a witch and exposed her to venomous serpents (much like, Dionigi mentions, Cleopatra), cut off her hair, breasts and tongue, and shot her with arrows, at which point she finally died.<sup>279</sup> Since the girl endured all of this with supreme patience and with her virginity intact (Dionigi emphasizes her virginity three times in this passage alone), her pure spirit ascended to Heaven and there, she was able to become the celestial spouse of Christ.

In Day One, Dionigi mentions Christina among other female saints who also demonstrated a strong tendency toward charity, and who also suffered a great deal of torture while keeping their virginity intact:

I say of him (meaning Saint Vincent of Saragossa), that, burning of Charity, and of the love of Christ, he overcame the fire, the grate, the iron

---

il precipitio nel lago; pur sofferse con patientia d'esser detta strega, maga, e incantatrice; che fosse posta in una fornace ardente; che le fossero attaccate al tenero petto, come se l'attaccò Cleopatra, le serpi velenose; che le fossero, per ischernirla, tagliate le chiome; che le fossero dal dilicato corpicciuolo suelte, e strappate le vergini mammelle; che le fosse tronca la lingua, e (ò esempio raro, e singulare d'invittissima patientia in un tenero, e dilicato petto d'una semplice verginella) ultimamente fosse esposta alle saette de gli empi adoratori de gli idoli, e col mezzo di quelle rendere lo spirito puro, & innocente nelle mani del suo celeste sposo Giesu Christo Signor nostro" (*DS IX.2*, p. 524).

Dionigi's attention to the female body in the *DS*, especially to the breasts, is not particular to Christina—he describes the body of the Virgin Mary in the same way: "E' occultata, e nascosta nelle picciole membra d'un infante la Potentia della Maestà, Dio pende dalle *vergini mammelle* della Santissima Madre" ["It is concealed and hidden in the little limbs of an infant the Power of the Majesty, God hangs from the virgin breasts of the Holiest Mother"] (*V.9*, p. 328); and again in *V.9*, p. 327: "O povertà indicibile, ò povertà incomparabile, ò povertà incomprendibile. E' rinchiuso nel *ventre angusto* di Maria Vergine colui, che tutto il mondo, e mille migliaia di mondi non potrebbon capere. O povertà. E' conceputo nelle *viscere Verginali*; e fatto nel tempo colui, ch'è inanzi al tempo figliuolo dell'eterno Padre celeste" ["Oh unspeakable poverty, oh incomparable poverty, oh incomprehensible poverty. He is enclosed within the narrow womb of the Virgin Mary, he whom the whole world, and thousands of thousands of worlds could never contain. Oh, poverty. He was conceived in the virginal viscera; and was made in the time that is before time, the son of the eternal heavenly Father"] (all italics mine).

<sup>279</sup> Dionigi's description aligns with that of Jacopo da Voragine's in *The Golden Legend I*: 387; however, Jacopo's version is much more violent.

hooks, the heat of the flaming swords, and finally the cruelty of the tormentors, and flew into the possession of the kingdom of Heaven victorious with the prize of martyrdom. Did not these simple Virgins, even being of a weaker sex, also have this charity? They certainly had it. I speak of Christina of Tyre who overcame infinite torments by her cruel Father and of Dione, and who overcame torments and disgraces under Julian; and ultimately, after escaping from the burning furnace, where she was for five straight days, was put to death by arrows. I speak of the Virgin martyrs Lucy, Agatha, Apollonia, Thecla, Catherine; and finally of all the infinite multitude of virgin saints, who burned with love for Christ, and made themselves his dear brides, loved by the son of the always blessed Virgin Mother.<sup>280</sup>

In almost all of these martyrdom stories (especially those of Christina, Thecla, and Catherine<sup>281</sup>), female saints are venerated not only for their love for Christ and devotion to their faith, but also for the preservation of their virginity, which is due mostly to the insuperable patience they demonstrate during their suffering and eventual martyrdom.<sup>282</sup>

Several of these saints encounter the threat of rape multiple times before succumbing to

---

<sup>280</sup> “Dicalo etiandio Vincenzo diacono, quale ardendo della Carità, e dell’amor di Christo, superò il fuoco, la grata, gli uncini di ferro, gli ardori delle lame infocate, e superata finalmente la crudeltà de i tormentatori, vittorioso con la palma del martirio se ne volò al possesso del Regno del Cielo. Non ebbero forse questa carità le semplici Verginelle se ben’erano di sesso più debole, e manco forte? L’ebbero certamente. Dicalo Christina di Tiro d’Italia, che superati infiniti tormenti del crudo Padre, e di Dione, superò etiandio tormenti, e vituperij sotto Giuliano; & ultimamente cavata dell’accesa fornace, dov’era stata cinque giorni continui, a colpi di saette fu fatta morire. Dicanlo le Vergini, e martiri Lucia, Agata, Apollonia, Tecla, Catarina; e finalmente tutta l’infinita moltitudine delle Sante Verginelle, ch’arsero dell’amor di Christo, e si fecero spose care, & amate del figliuolo della sempre Beata Vergine Madre” (*DS* I.1, pp. 16-17). This is one of the few times that Dionigi highlights the suffering of a male saint; regardless, he does not mention Vincent’s virginal (or non-virginal) status at the time of martyrdom.

<sup>281</sup> See Dionigi’s description of Thecla’s martyrdom: “Quale fu la patientia di Tecla prima martire, e discepola del predicator delle genti Paulo Apostolo? Fu d’animo così sofferente questa santissima vergine, che in virtù del suo novello sposo Giesu Christo, superò il fuoco, fece mansueti i leoni, e gli orsi; e i tori di fieri fece piacevoli, e non le nocquero, com’anche superò i serpenti a cui era stata esposta dando loro la morte” [“How great was the patience of Thecla, the first martyr, and disciple of the Apostle Paul, preacher of the people? This holy virgin had such a suffering soul that in virtue of her new spouse Jesus Christ, she overcame the fire, tamed lions and bears, and made angry bulls pleasant without harming them, and she also overcame serpents to which she was exposed, killing them”] (*IX.2*, p. 524).

<sup>282</sup> See *DS* IX.7, p. 556: “La patientia è quella ... (che) difende la beata integrità nelle Vergini, la faticosa castità nelle vedove, e l’individua carità ne i congiunti, e ne i maritati” [“Patience is that which defends the blessed integrity of Virgins, the strenuous chastity of widows, and the individual charity of the betrothed and of spouses”].

death by torture; a few even choose to end their own lives rather than be subjected to the loss of their virginity or chastity.<sup>283</sup> Although the readers of these spiritualization texts did not face the same physical dangers which threatened the saints of centuries past, their stories were meant both to scare and encourage readers into behaving piously and imitating the lives of these martyred men and women, especially where virginity and chastity were concerned.<sup>284</sup>

The preservation of virginity is of utmost importance in the *DS*, not only for martyred saints, but for all women. In the Introduction to Day One of the *DS*, Dionigi rails against women who sold their bodies in order to provide food for their children during the famine: even though they were desperate, the fear of starvation was not, in his eyes, a valid excuse to resort to sinfulness and disrespect of the purity of the body. This was also one of the main results of the plague described by Boccaccio: the “collapse of the family, which, in turn, leads to the impurity of women.”<sup>285</sup>

Chastity, another virtue for women honored in the *DS*, is almost as highly praised as virginity. Dionigi also refers to the theme of Day Five, “la Santa Castità,” as the “mirror of the Virgins” and “Refuge of the Widows” (“lucidissimo specchio delle sante Vergini, infallibile rifugio delle sconsolate Vedovelle,” 42). According to Dionigi,

---

<sup>283</sup> It is important to note the difference between virginity and chastity—a virgin is a person who has never engaged in sexual intercourse, whereas a chaste person may or may not be a virgin but has, either way, chosen at some point to abstain from sexual intercourse. For more clarification see Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* 1-18.

<sup>284</sup> See Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* 188-89: “By the twelfth century the historical circumstances which produced martyrs were long gone. Martyrdom, once so central to Christian identity, had become part of Christian mythology rather than of Christian life. Yet the continued production of narratives about martyred saints indicates martyrdom still had powerful symbolic value. Saints’ lives about martyrs were not offering models that medieval men and women could easily imitate, so what did they mean for contemporary audiences? Possibly the meaning was different for men and women, but the virginity of female martyrs was evidently central to their value for both sexes.”

<sup>285</sup> Levenstein, “Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*” 317.

chastity is easily possessed, especially if one follows the examples of biblical figures such as Susannah, Hannah, and the Virgin Mary. There are also figures and parables that represent the chastity of wives, widows, widowers, and virgins: “Their chastity, so that it is held and possessed easily by all; wives should make themselves mirrors of the chastity of Susannah, widows of the chastity of Hannah, and Virgins of the chastity of Mary, eternal Virgin, eternally chaste. Husbands should mirror the chastity of Saint Malchus, the captive monk and prisoner; widowers, the chastity of Joseph, and male Virgins, the chastity of John the Evangelist, holy Virgin.”<sup>286</sup> However easily obtained and held chastity may be, though, Dionigi still takes pains to warn even nuns in cloisters to remain aware of and safeguard their purity: “Regardless, venerable spouse of Christ, guard yourself well, and stay alert, so that when the Devil will have entered into the cloisters of your Monastery, and will have considered the operations of everyone, he will find nothing for which he can accuse you. For this reason I warn you, my beloved sister in Christ, that for the love of Jesus Christ you must never be idle.”<sup>287</sup>

The way in which Dionigi focuses on the violent martyrdoms of female saints may seem problematic—even pornographic—to today’s reader, but was commonplace in the spiritualization genre and in other hagiographies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What is more problematic is that male saints are hardly, if ever, described or

---

<sup>286</sup> “La quale castità, accioche da tutti sia tenuta e posseduta facilmente; le maritate si specchino nella castità di Susanna, le vedove nelle castità d’Anna, e le Vergini nel la castità di Maria sempre Vergine, e sempre casta. Gli ammogliati si specchino nella castità di Malco monaco cattivo, e prigioniero; i vedovi nella castità di Gioseffo giusto, e i Vergini nella castità di Giovanni Evangelista santissimo Vergine” (*DS* I.5, p. 46).

<sup>287</sup> “E però, sposa venerabile di Christo, guarda bene, e stà avertita, che quando il Diavolo sarà entrato ne i chiostri del tuo Monastero, & havrà considerato l’operationi di ciascuna, che non truovi cosa, di cui ti possa accusare. Per questa cagione t’ammonisco, ò sorella in Christo da me molto amata, che per amor di Giesu Christo tu non sij mai otiosa” (*DS* I.8, p. 69).



defined in the same way.<sup>288</sup> Karen Winstead underlines the pervasiveness of sexual persecution in early modern hagiography (which, Simon Gaunt reminds us, is “an androcentric genre”): “The themes of sexual desire and frustration that so often lead to the virgin martyr’s persecution recur in the ordeals she endures. She is stripped and beaten before an audience of leering spectators. She is hauled off to a brothel or otherwise threatened with rape. Her breasts or nipples are torn off. She is shaved or strung up by her hair” (Winstead 6). Almost all of these details occur in Christina’s story, and Dionigi’s narrators recount them in lurid detail. Although the voyeurism of the narrators is couched in discussions of a female saint’s patience, fortitude and devotion, it is still glaringly present, and highlighted even further by the absence and silence of female narrators.<sup>289</sup> Valeria Finucci analyzes this absence in relationship to the men who narrate the absentee female:

As object of a libido metaphorically veiled, she serves in the end to guarantee less male libido and more male solidarity, the bonding of the group in which this libido is being excited. There is no need to give this woman an identity; the purpose of the description is not to evoke a specific person but to visualize female beauty. The represented ideal can thus easily erase the real being that has permitted its representation, and woman as physical being can be conveniently removed from woman as

---

<sup>288</sup> See Gaunt 185-86: “In patristic writing, women were associated with the flesh, men with the spirit. Women had to transcend the body in a way men did not. Reproduction was often viewed as the only justification for sex and virginity was seen as the highest ideal for women ... Virginity is a form of sexuality as much as monogamy or promiscuity. Classifying a woman as a virgin constructs her primarily in relation to her sexuality as much as classifying her as a married woman or a whore. Medieval narratives of virgin saints do not deny the female saint’s sexuality; on the contrary they define her exclusively in relation to it, which ... is not the case for male saints.”

<sup>289</sup> Gaunt corroborates the voyeurism implicit in texts from which Dionigi likely drew inspiration: “Hagiographical texts about women are deeply voyeuristic, dressing up in a pious framework the most horrific attacks on women, which the women in question are portrayed as welcoming. Certain scenes, when abstracted from their context, have much in common with modern pornography depicting bondage and mutilation. The value of martyrdom as a sign of faith and self-sacrifice as no doubt clear to medieval audiences, but is there not also an element of pleasure implicit in the numerous descriptions of the violation of nubile female bodies?” (Gaunt 197-98).

summation of an attractiveness aesthetically constructed. Transfixed into an immutable image and set outside history, woman is cast as perfect as long as she witnesses in silence, and from her assigned place, her own reconstruction. (*The Lady Vanishes* 53)

Despite all of this, the woman in these spiritualized texts—especially the *DS*—is a necessary presence, even if her presence is disguised as an absence.

## **VI. Dionigi's *Amor Cortese* and the *santa rappresentazione* of Saint Christina**

In 1570, 24 years before he wrote the *DS*, Dionigi published a pastoral comedy entitled *Amor Cortese*. The work follows in the footsteps of other Italian poets composing in the pastoral genre in the sixteenth century; Dionigi might have been inspired by works such as Baldassare Castiglione's *Tirsi* (1506), Luigi Tansillo's *I due pellegrini* (1528), and Agostino Beccari's *Sacrificio* (1555).<sup>290</sup> Immediately following the publication of Dionigi's work came Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and, a few decades later, Guarini's *Pastor fido* (1590). Dionigi's close friend, Cesare Simonetti, wrote a similar work in 1588 with the title *Amaranta*.

Far from the rigidity and religiosity of his *Decamerone Spirituale*, the *Amor Cortese* is full of comical situations and witty arguments on the subject of love. Among the first introductory sonnets, Dionigi paints a picture of the forest in which the comedy will take place and indicates his reasons for the name he gives the work:

Comedia fui. Hor tra pastori ignobili

Dal vitio discacciata nido facciomi,

E fra gli ombrosi spechi all'aure mobili

---

<sup>290</sup> Franco Battistelli, "Francesco Dionigi da Fano. Profilo di un letterato tra commedia pastorale e tragedia agiografica" 27.

I pastorali amori canto, e garrolo;  
 Mentr'al suon degli augelli il fiume mormora,  
 E chet'al mio cantar le fiere stannosi;  
 Onde ciascuno Pastorale chiamami,  
 D'Amor Cortese nome insieme dandomi.<sup>291</sup>

The plot centers on two shepherds, Montano and Uranio, who are enamored of two nymphs, Fillida and Amarillida (respectively). The lovesick men seek consolation in each other's company, singing songs together and lamenting the fickleness of women. Eventually they leave each other to seek out the objects of their affection. When the women appear on the scene, they joke to the audience about the insatiable desires the men exhibit toward them.<sup>292</sup> At times, the Fanese dialect is mixed into verses, mostly by the villainous character Ursacchio, to depict scenes that are bawdier in nature. Ursacchio also makes the more disparaging and violent remarks to, and regarding, women, describing how he'd like to beat them in the middle of the forest, and worse.<sup>293</sup> These bold remarks are bookended by the lamentations of the shepherds, who continue to chase the nymphs until Uranio meets his tragic end by suicide, proclaiming himself a "martyr";<sup>294</sup> fortunately, he is resurrected by a necromancer, a type of magic Dionigi will

---

<sup>291</sup> "I was a Comedy. Now, among ignoble shepherds, / I make my nest, banished by vice, / And among the shadowy reflections of mobile souls / I sing and talk of pastoral loves; / While the river murmurs to the sound of the birds, / And the beasts stand when I sing; / Whence every Pastoral play calls me, / By *Amor Cortese* they give me name."

<sup>292</sup> Amarillida tells the audience: "Ma mostrar non gli vuoi mio intento intero, / che con risa, e con sdegno uso innescarlo, / E involto trarlo all'amorosa rete, / Poi, ch'egli ha del mio amor costante sete."

<sup>293</sup> "Ogni femina vuole far la schifa. / E poi grappa la rifa tutt'intiera. / [...] / [*speaking directly to Amarillida*]: Quella bianca gonnella vuoi scrullarti; / E tante botte darti in questo bosco / Finché diventi losco l'asinello."

<sup>294</sup> "Hor voglio pur'i miei giorni finire / Va giù venen nell'aghiacciato core, / Dando a' miei mali l'ultimo martire, / Amarillide ancide il suo pastore."

later scorn in the *DS*. The play ends on a high note, to the amusement and delight of the audience.

Dionigi's *sacra rappresentazione* of Saint Christina (1592) is a work in which a female is the protagonist. While the content of the play does not differ greatly from other *sacre rappresentazioni* of the period, nor from the *passio* tradition (in which the martyrdom of saints is recounted), it is consistent with the way in which Dionigi depicts female saints in his writing and is a complete reversal from the light and bawdy scenes of the *Amor Cortese*. The work begins with a four-page dedicatory letter from Dionigi to his patron, Cardinal Girolamo Rusticucci; in it, Dionigi singles out Christina as his favorite saint, to whom he often prays for protection and aid. He writes: "I, knowing well from my travails, in addition to praying to the blessed Virgin, who carried in her inviolate womb and gave birth to the well-being of the world, I have also prayed particularly to this young virgin, so that her benign aid will shield me from Divine pity. From that, speaking the truth, I confess to be liberated and defended from many troubles, and from many imminent dangers."<sup>295</sup> His objective in writing this *sacra rappresentazione* is to express gratitude toward this "vera Atleta di Christo,"<sup>296</sup> and make it so that the noble House of Rusticucci falls under the protection of the saint.

Immediately following the dedicatory letter and preceding the *dramatis personae*, there are five dedicatory poems exchanged between historical figures, authors, and saints.

These poems are either octaves or sonnets and, in order, are addressed: 1) "Del Signor

---

<sup>295</sup> "Il che io benissimo conoscendo, nei miei travagli, insieme con la beata Vergine, che nell'inviolato ventre portò, e partì or la salute del mondo, ho pregato questa Verginella particolarmente, accioche dalla Divina pietà, benigne il suo aiuto m'impetrino. Onde, il vero dicendo, confesso essere stato da molti travagli, e da molti sovrastanti pericoli, liberato, e difeso." Later in the letter Dionigi calls out his potential critics, praying to Christina that she will silence them.

<sup>296</sup> The word *atleta* comes from the Greek *athlon* (ἄθλον), meaning "prize" (Online Etymology Dictionary).

Cesare Simonetti all'Illustrissimo Signor Cardinale Rusticucci"; 2) "Del medesimo al Dionigi"; 3) "Agostino Nardi à Santa Christina"; 4) "A la gloriosissima Santa Christina F. Gio. Chrisostomo Diana"; and 5) "Di M. Francesco Dionigi à Santa Christina." The first four poems are unremarkable and merely praise the heroic deeds of Saint Christina or the style of Dionigi (in the second, comparing him to the painter Apelles). Two of these—the third and fifth, both addressed to Christina—call her, respectively, "Spregiatrice" (one who despises or disdains something or someone) or "schernitrice" (one who scorns or mocks); both are in reference to the saint's disdain for tyrants and kings, namely, the ones who tortured her for worshipping Christ.

Dionigi's poem reads:

O De' Tiranni schernitrice altiera,  
In cui sgorgò con ampio abisso Dio  
Acque di gratie eterna, ch'è l'oblio  
Ti rapiro, e ti dieder gloria intiera;  
S'ad incontrarti ogni celeste schiera,  
Mentre vincesti il cieco mondo rio,  
Da le soglie del Ciel gioconda uscio  
Per menarti à perpetua Primavera;  
Che meraviglia è se cantando, roco  
Augel palustre, in non ben colti carmi  
Raccoglier tenta i tuoi gran fatti egregi?  
Ben so, che quel ch'ei ne racconta è poco.  
Che, e versi, e rime, e moli, e Bronzi, e marmi

In Ciel t'han dato i sempiterni Regi.<sup>297</sup>

This dedicatory sonnet is interesting for the echoes between it and the text of the *DS*.

Dionigi compares himself to a raspy-voiced marsh bird (*roco* / *Augel palustre*), which in contemporary poetry is a swan.<sup>298</sup> His choice of the verb *rapire* in the fourth line implies that Christina was whisked away (really, abducted or kidnapped) from the “cieco mondo rio” (blind, guilty world) that she aimed to defeat. Despite all of her heavenly gifts, Dionigi wants to set her on a pedestal by means of his glorification of her (that is, he will perform the best possible apotheosis). At the same time, he acknowledges his inadequacy in doing so, which he also expresses in his dedicatory letters to Rusticucci both in this work and in the *DS*.

The prologue of the *sacra rappresentazione* is addressed solely to the women who attend the performance; in fact, Dionigi uses the gender-inclusive “Spettatori” only once, in the beginning of the prologue, and then switches exclusively to the feminine “Spettatrici.” He warns the “Donne gentili” several times that the scenes they are about to watch will be sensorially and emotionally difficult, and gives them multiple chances to flee if they feel they are not strong enough to bear witness to the reenactment of Christina’s martyrdom:

---

<sup>297</sup> “Oh highest scorner of Tyrants, / God made gush from the deep abyss / The waters of eternal grace, which, needing to do so, / Took you, and gave you full glory: / In order to meet you, every celestial crowd, / While you defeated the evil, blind world, / Stood at the threshold of the joyous Heavens / To lead you into eternal Spring; / What wonder it is if, singing, raspy / Bird of the swamp, in not well-educated songs / Tries to gather your egregious feats? / I know well, that what he recounts is little. / That, in Heaven the eternal Kings have given you / Verses, rhymes, piers, Bronzes, and marble statues.”

<sup>298</sup> See, for instance: Torquato Tasso, *Rime d'amore* 78: “Ma, se rassembro *augel palustre e roco*, / Cigno parrò lungo il tuo nobil fiume / Ch'abbia l'ore di morte omai vicine...”; Celio Magno, sonnets 187 and especially 339: “Dunque a *palustre e roco augel* s'inchina / di Pindo il più gentil cigno canoro / qual tu, Ferrari?”; and Benedetto Menzini, Canzone LIX: “Benchè di sormontare in van s'affanna, / Oltre alle nubi un *roco augel palustre*, / Che non soffre del ciel raggi e scintille...”. Dionigi repeats the phrase at the very end of the prologue: “Se ben'humili sono le parole, / Bassi i concetti; e se ben siamo tutti / *Rochi palustri Augelli*...”.

E voi Donne gentili, e delicate,  
C'havete colmo di pietade il petto;  
[...]  
Deh s'alcuna di voi è quì, che provi  
Quanto sia grande il filiale amore;  
Lungi di quì fuggite, ò spettatrici.<sup>299</sup>

Dionigi directs these warnings first toward all women in the audience, and then focuses them toward the youngest ladies (“Donzelle”), saying that if they can manage to stay and watch the play, they should then pay attention and imitate Christina and her actions:

E voi Donzelle tenere, e gentili,  
D'età conformi, e di semplicitade  
A questa pura, e santa Verginella,  
Tosto volgete in altra parte i piedi  
Se non havete di diamante i cori,  
E se piu crude, e piu sorde non siete  
D'alcun scoglio, che'l mar frange, e percuote.  
Che piu attendete? Perche non partite  
Senz'aspettar d'udir tanto cordoglio?  
Deh partitevi presto, che vi veggo  
Tutte colme di pianto, e di dolore,  
E tutti colmi d'amarezza i vostri  
Petti gentili, alberghi di pietade.<sup>300</sup>

---

<sup>299</sup> “And you gentle and delicate Women, / Who have chests full of piety; [...] Oh, if one of you is here, who knows / How great is filial love; / Far from here you must flee, o spectators.”

Once again, Dionigi focuses on the body of the women—both of Christina and of the women in the audience—and their relative physical and emotional fragility. Their bodies, as he insists throughout the *rappresentazione* and the *DS*, are vessels of piety, even in the architectural sense (“alberghi di pietade”), and must be preserved at all costs. Christina does not encounter any threats to her virginity, but dies a virgin; this is enough to categorize her as a virgin martyr, and the aspect of her intact virginity is in many ways more important than her devotion to her faith.

In the *DS*, and in both contemporary and earlier hagiographic works, male chastity and purity can be maintained simply by eliminating the presence of females from a male’s everyday life, and by considering females to be evil and actively avoiding them, even by sight. Dionigi writes in the *DS*: “One understands that it is the best thing, in maintaining cleanliness and the purity of chastity, not to look at these women who, as Saint Jerome says in another place, are nothing but a noxious breed, carrying with them the Devil and the road toward iniquity, and who strike like venomous scorpions” (I.5, p. 45).<sup>301</sup> Now women are no longer birds but arachnids, namely, venomous ones. He also insists that the Devil makes women like Eve extremely dangerous, and burns them so frequently with the fires of Hell and sin that they turn from white bodies into black

---

<sup>300</sup> “And you tender and gentle young women, / Of the same age and simplicity / As this pure and holy young Virgin / Also turn your feet in the other direction / If you do not have hearts of diamond, / And if you are not more crude, or more deaf, / Than any cliff that the sea would hit, and break. / What are you waiting for? Why do you not leave / Without waiting to hear of such suffering? / Oh, leave now, now that I see you / All full of tears, and pain, / And full of bitterness in your / Gentle chests, those houses of piety.”

<sup>301</sup> “Di dove si cava, ch’ottima cosa sia per mantenersi nella nettezza, e nella candidezza della castità il non veder queste femine; quali, come dice in un’altro luogo questo gran Padre [S. Girolamo], altro non sono, ch’una razza molto nociva, che la porta del Diavolo, che la via dell’iniquità, e che percuotono quasi scorpioni avelenati.”



cauldrons.<sup>302</sup> In fact, it is best not to look upon any beautiful thing, especially a woman, as it can only lead to sin and ruination:

And if you want to be chaste, and clean of sin in flesh and body, after you have made yourself clean in mind; flee not only the practice of women, but also when you can, refuse to look at them; if David had not seen from the window of his house the beautiful Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, he would not have committed adultery, and would not have killed her husband, as he did. And yet it is a good, even a great thing, to see with your intellect the case of David so that you do not fall, as he fell; remove the eyes of the body from petulance; do not mix them among the company of women; do not raise your eyes so easily from the windows, where they are. Thus from afar David saw her, from whom he was taken. As Saint Augustine says, woman is distant, but libido is near.<sup>303</sup>

At the same time, it is necessary to reflect upon a woman's martyrdom, even if doing so means witnessing violent sexual assault on her body; the more she resists the violation and the harder she works to preserve her virginity, the more she is admired. This is very much the case for the *sacra rappresentazione* that Dionigi writes for Saint Christina.

---

<sup>302</sup> *DS* I.7, p. 60: "E antichissima usanza del Diavolo questa di gabbar le vergini, e le giovani donne con la Donna. Non vi soviene come fu gabbata, e in sembianza di cui, la nostra prima madre Eva? Dal Demonio c'haveva faccia di donna. Io vedo una pentola accesa, dice Gieremia, cioè, io vedo una vecchia negra. Percioche sia pur quanto si voglia esser bianca una di queste pentole, che mettendosi spesso al fuoco, si fa negra" ["It is an ancient practice of the Devil to swindle virgins and young girls in the guise of a Woman. Do you not remember, in the semblance of which form, our first mother Eve was duped? By a Demon who had the face of a woman. I see a cauldron aflame, says Jeremiah, that is, I see an old black woman. Thus it is, that even if one of these cauldrons wishes to be white, putting itself often to the flame, it becomes blackened"].

<sup>303</sup> "E s'in tutto vuoi esser casto, e netto delle macchie della carne nel corpo, dopo che sarai netto nella mente; fuggi non pure la pratica delle femine, ma anche quanto puoi abborisci di vederle, che se Davide non havesse veduto dal solaro della casa regia la bella Betsabea moglie d'Uria, non havria adulterato, e non havria fatto uccidere il marito di lei, come fece. E però è buona, anzi è ottima cosa, mettendosi avanti gli occhi dell'intelletto il caso di Davide per non cadere, com'egli cadde; riprimire gli occhi del corpo dalla petolantia; non si mescolar fra le femine; e non alzar facilmente gli occhi alle finestre, dov'elleno sono. Percioche di lontano vide Davide colei, da cui fu preso. Lungi la femina, e d'appresso la libidine, dice Agostin santo" (*DS* I.5, p. 44). See also X.4, pp. 600-01, where Dionigi places blame upon Helen, Lucrezia and Susannah for dishonoring the men whom they caused ruin.

In the body of the play, the spectatorial gaze is doubly focused on Christina's body, both in the physical horrors of her martyrdom and in the narration of those actions within the lines of the play. Christina's father, Urbano, is first depicted by Dionigi as a loving and affectionate father; later in the play, as Christina resists his demands and repeatedly chooses to follow Christ against his wishes, he becomes inhumanely violent. Dionigi describes his actions in the following passage:

Comandò, che lontano dal palazzo,  
Quant'un tiro di man saria, condotta  
Fosse una ruota grande; e così fatto,  
Fece spogliar la tenera figliuola,  
E sopra la gran ruota  
Poi la fece legare; e tutto fuoco  
Accendere, onde presto si strugesse  
Il corpo della casta verginella.<sup>304</sup>

It is no wonder that Franco Battistelli calls these descriptions "Delizie, dunque, da Marchese di Sade" (40): throughout the play (and, as we have seen, throughout the *DS*), the gaze on the female body, especially in moments of violence, weakness, or martyrdom, is overtly sexualized. Furthermore, the character of Christina repeats over and over that these tortures are pleasing to her:

Segui pur la tua impresa, e fammi grata  
Al mio Signor col mezzo de' martirij;  
Che i flagelli, e l'acerbe battiture

---

<sup>304</sup> "He commanded that, far from the palace, / As far as a pull of the hand, would be / led a great wheel; and having done this, / He made the tender young girl strip, / And on the large wheel / Then made her lay; and fire / Ignite, whence soon struggled / The body of the chaste little virgin."

Tutte mi son piacevolezze, e grate  
 Accoglienze; gli uncini, e le tanaglie,  
 E le fornaci, e i principitij, sono  
 A me strade piacevoli, et amene  
 Per gir'al mio Signor; per far'acquisto  
 Del Cielo; e per goder l'alta presenza,  
 E l'alta Maestate del mio Christo,  
 Re del Cielo invisibile, e immortale.<sup>305</sup>

After the death of Christina, the audience sees her mother weeping, and a chorus both laments her death and celebrates her life, repeating phrases referring to women as the “fragil sesso” and reiterating her virgin status four more times.

## V. Conclusion

It is obvious that, while Dionigi depicts both male and female martyrs in his *Decamerone Spirituale*, he subjects the female saints and characters to a much higher degree of speculation concerning their virginity or sexual status, rather than the deeds they performed while alive. Dionigi may have chosen, almost exclusively, to name his *brigata* members after martyred male saints and to set them on the “correct path” in living holy lives by having them avoid all contact with females on their journey. However, the amount of attention the men pay to the recounting of violent martyrdoms of female saints—especially where virginity and rape are involved—invalidates these attempts at

---

<sup>305</sup> “Follow your orders, and make me grateful / To my Lord in the midst of martyrs; / That the whips, and the harsh beatings / Are all pleasing to me, and welcome / Refuge; the hooks, the pincers, / And the furnace, and the precipices, are / To me pleasant and agreeable roads / That lead me to my Lord; to obtain / Heaven; and to enjoy the lofty presence, / And the high Majesty of my Christ, / King of the invisible and immortal Heavens.”

maintaining full abstinence. The women in this text are intended as nothing more than “sites of culture”: Reina Green investigates, for example, the role of Cleopatra in “eroticizing virtue” in Early Modern drama; the roles of the many other women in the *DS* are not much different.<sup>306</sup> In this final chapter, I hope to have shown that women, while removed from the text as narrators, are still extremely important as characters and signifiers. Regardless of the fact that they are defined almost solely by their sexuality (even the Virgin Mary, who, by means of her name is likely the most apparent case of this defining category), and regardless of their relative silence in the text, they do speak: they speak to the societal norms, both in biblical and Counter-Reformation societies, expected of women and the relationships that women bear to men, both inside and outside of the Church, of history, and of mythology.

---

<sup>306</sup> See Green, “Eroticizing Virtue: The Role of Cleopatra in Early Modern Drama,” in *Women as Sites of Culture*.

## Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of this project, I set out to prove that the *Decamerone Spirituale* and spiritualizing works similar to it were indicative of a shift in European culture and literature, and furthermore, that they constituted a separate strand of literature that was large enough to be considered a ‘subgenre’ of the Italian literary canon we recognize and study today. In the scope of this dissertation, I have argued that the way in which Francesco Dionigi depicts both the cultural and religious sentiments of his time, as well as how he places both men and women into this cultural-religious framework, forms part of a pervasive literary attitude which merits further study in the literature classroom. Dionigi might fall right in the middle of the spiritualization timeline, but the fact that there is a timeline at all is the more fascinating part.

When confronting the period of the Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, scholars and critics have tended to focus much more on the ‘classics’ of Italian (and European) literature than on the many contemporary literary responses to, and imitations and plagiarisms of, these works. The history behind copyright and plagiarism is well-documented, but the authors of the spiritualization ‘movement’ are careful to maneuver around the few laws that existed at the time and, in presenting their works as either ‘wholly original’ or mere ‘imitations’ of better-known authors, manage to create loopholes whereby their work cannot be classified as plagiarism *per se*. This raises questions and discussions on the notion of plagiarism as we define it today, as well as the ideology of authorship and originality of a text.

Merriam-Webster provides two definitions for the word “plagiarize.” The first states that “to plagiarize” means “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as

one's own; [to] use (another's production) without crediting the source.” The second is “to commit literary theft; [to] present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.”<sup>307</sup> Dionigi commits both of these ‘crimes’ when he produces the *Decamerone Spirituale* and gives no credit to Boccaccio, neither for the use of the former author’s textual structure (the *cornice*), nor for the thousands of words and sentences he ‘borrows’ and reshapes as his own. But while this type of literary production and behavior would be condemned and harshly penalized today, Dionigi and the many authors of the spiritualization ‘movement’ walked away unscathed (in every way except economically). Plagiarism laws were not created until the early 1600s and took centuries to solidify into the intellectual property laws we know and practice today.<sup>308</sup> However, the idea of ‘literary theft’ emerged far before this time, and the piracy of ideas and written thoughts concerned many authors and printers, even at the same time that Dionigi and other spiritualizing authors were writing.<sup>309</sup> Given that this behavior continued well into the seventeenth century, after the first laws regarding intellectual property and the *privilegio* were established, it raises questions on these laws and how they were enforced (or evaded). How were Dionigi, Malipiero, Berni, Gallucci and so many others able to present another author’s work, with minor changes, as their own in the midst of these debates? Unfortunately, without better knowledge of their readership (if it existed at all),

---

<sup>307</sup> “Plagiarize.” Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2017. The Latin root of the word is “plagiarius,” or kidnapper (Online Etymology Dictionary).

<sup>308</sup> For more information, see Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome*, and Baldwin, *The Copyright Wars: Three Centuries of Trans-Atlantic Battle*.

<sup>309</sup> See Johns, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates*. See also Melchiorre Gioia, *Cenni sulla pirateria libraria* (1835) for a slightly closer-to-contemporary view on literary piracy on the account of printers (whom Gioia calls “stampatori-ladri”; he even condemns printers who published his works without his consent).

it is impossible to tell if their intentions succeeded. Looking back today and seeing that these authors are hardly known, however, might answer that query.

In her article on the censorship and *rinnovamento* of texts in this period, Cecilia Luzzi uses the phrase “literary paternity” (“paternità letteraria”) to acknowledge the genealogy that exists between Petrarch’s works and the works of those who imitated and copied him (mainly focusing on Malipiero’s *Petrarcha Spirituale*).<sup>310</sup> I find this notion of paternity particularly interesting, given Dionigi’s position on the ‘maternity’ of immaterial concepts such as sins and virtues, which I mentioned briefly in chapter 4. The men of Dionigi’s *brigata* neither have families, nor will they ever create them. In the city they left behind, men and women are increasingly unable to produce offspring due to the famine, and many of those who already have children are, according to Dionigi, unable to fulfill their roles as parents, let alone moral guides. Regardless of these interruptions to the production and maintenance of family structure, genealogy is very important to both Dionigi and the characters in his text.

The topic of gender—whether in terms of gender roles, sexuality, or expression—is manifold in the *DS* and warrants much more attention than I have focused on it in this dissertation. Despite Dionigi’s insistence on the chastity of his *brigata* members and his refusal to include women in their group, the men have much to say about the roles, expectations, and sexual behaviors of women: both of the women in history and myth and of the women with whom they live in Fano. In Dionigi’s *proemio*, we see that the women of Fano are similar to those seen in the *proemio* of the *Decameron*: they are frail, timorous women shut up in their rooms, unable to attend Church or read for pleasure. Dionigi takes pity on these “devotissime Donne” and hopes that, regardless of how they

---

<sup>310</sup> Luzzi, “Censura e rinnovamento” 13.

come to consume the material in the *DS*, it is able to guide them in the same way as the men who read it. He writes: “E credo, che le già dette Donne, che questi ragionamenti leggeranno, siano per ricevere ottimi consigli, sì per fuggire il male, come per operare il bene etiandio à loro spirituale contento, e diletto, e à molti giovevoli frutti raccogliere” (“And I believe that the aforementioned Women who will read these *ragionamenti* shall receive good advice, both in fleeing evil and in working in goodness to their spiritual content and delight, and shall gather many joyous fruits”).<sup>311</sup> If Dionigi intends the book to be read by both (spiritual) men and women, why not include women on the fictional journey and among the storytellers? Why erase their agency altogether in the microtext?

To be fair, Dionigi also erases most of the agency of the male characters as well, even of the male narrators. The narrators possess hardly any defining personality traits, and the traits that they do embody are largely the same as the *Decameron* storytellers to whom they correspond. We can take this argument one step further and claim that Dionigi even erases his *own* agency, since the entirety of the *DS*—excluding the dedicatory letter and, to a certain extent, his *canzoni*—is either a ‘plagiarism’ of the macrotext of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* or page after page of quotes from the Bible or other historical texts. There are very few parts of the *DS* where Dionigi can claim to have any original contribution: in his choices for the names of his *brigata* members, in the choice of the themes for each Day, and in his tying the ‘plot’ of the book to the concurrent history of Fano. The remainder of the work is nothing more than a mosaic that is fraught with contradictions; for example, when Dionigi laments his inability to reproduce the eloquence of “that Great Tuscan [Boccaccio],” but ultimately refuses to cite Boccaccio as the main source of his work.

---

<sup>311</sup> *DS* Proemio, p. 2.



If all of this is true, how can we consider the *DS*, even minimally, to be a piece of useful literature, let alone one worthy of study? It is a text that is un-gendered, un-authored, hardly legible, and unable to fulfill its intentions of being a pure, spiritual guidebook. While studying a spiritualized work of literature proves frustrating and tedious at best, I argue that the pedagogical possibilities are much more fruitful. Concerning the Counter-Reformation (or the sixteenth century, or the Italian and European Renaissance in general), this type of literature is rife with historical information, regarding both contemporary societal and religious attitudes and the cultural changes that occurred after the Council of Trent. Regarding Women and Gender Studies, the work fits neatly into the spiritual (and spiritualized) genre of literature typical of the period, and can be read alongside the multiple and prolific female authors who published spiritual poetry and pastoral dramas concurrently; it can also open a range of discussion topics related to the silencing of women in literature and attitudes toward women reaching back to the times of ancient Greek philosophy. In the canon of Italian literature, a work like the *DS* can highlight the intricacies of the original work it seeks to recuperate.

It is my hope that the works of the spiritualization ‘movement’, as I have defined it, continue to be studied by scholars of Italian and European literature and history. Was it really a genre shift, or a political or religious statement that folds into the conversation surrounding it? Was it a true rupture of the canon, or merely a blip on the radar of literary history? Regardless of the notoriety (or lack thereof) that these works and authors received, I believe that, instead of detracting from the richness of the original works their authors sought to renovate, these works complemented their strengths and, today, make the modern critic admit their weaknesses. I have touched on only a few possible

discussion points within the *DS* and the spiritualization movement in general; there is much more to be said regarding topics such as xenophobia, ageism, disease, literary style, and parody—and these are merely topics found in the *DS*. In the future, a monograph dedicated to all, or even a few, of these aspects would be a helpful and handy contribution to any of the above-mentioned fields, but particularly to Italian literary studies.

## Appendix A: The *canzoni* of the *Decamerone Spirituale*

### Day 1: Ugone / Open Theme

Tu che scendesti, ò sempiterno Amore  
    Ne i cuor de' tuoi fedeli,  
    E gli accendesti di celest' ardore;  
Scendi, ti priego, in noi, reggi, e governa  
    I cor, le lingue, e l'opere à grandezza  
    De l'alta, immensa Maestade eterna,  
    Che ci ha adornati di tanta bellezza,  
    Che fa che non curiam d'altra vaghezza.  
    Pur ti semo fedeli,  
    E pur bramiamo il tuo superno ardore  
Eterna Carità, ch' innamorasti  
    De le cose del Cielo i petti humani,  
    Deh dona a noi santi pensieri, e casti,  
    Da l'amor di qua giù fatti lontani.  
    Fa sant' Amor, che i desir nostr' insani  
    Sian fatti a te fedeli,  
    E sian' accesi del tuo Santo ardore.  
Che se la fiamma del tuo puro fuoco  
    Illustrerà le nostre oscure menti,  
    Non pur ti loderemo in ogni luoco,  
    Ma anco del tuo amor lieti, e contenti,  
    Spregiando il mondo, e le cose presenti,  
    Contemplerem fedeli  
    Quanto fia grande il tuo possente Ardore.

You who descended, o Eternal Love  
    Into the hearts of your faithful,  
    And illuminated them with celestial ardor;  
Descend, I beg you, into us, rule, and govern  
    Hearts, tongues, and works toward greatness  
    Of the high, immense, eternal Majesty  
    Who has adorned us in so much beauty,  
    That is enough to dissolve any other worry.  
    Still we are faithful to you,  
    And still we crave your supreme love.  
Eternal Charity, you who made enamored  
    Human hearts of heavenly things,  
    Please turn saintly and chaste thoughts to us,  
    Distanced way down here from love.  
    Make, holy Love, that our unhealthy desires  
    Are made faithful to you,  
    And are ignited by your Holy ardor.  
If the flame of your pure fire  
    Illuminates our darkened minds,  
    Not only will we praise you in all places,  
    But also, merry and content, we will  
    Spread word of your love to the world,  
    And we will contemplate faithfully  
    How great your powerful Love will be.

### Day 2: Nicostrato / L'umiltà

Chi ci menerà al'alta Maestade  
    Se non ci mena la sant'Humiltade?  
Vien dunque, nel mio core, e favvi stanza  
    Humilissimo figlio di Maria;  
    E stampavi pietoso  
    De la sant'humiltà la virtù, sanza  
    Cui, in ciel non potria gir quest'alma mia.  
    Di ciò son desioso  
    Per goderti in eterno glorioso  
    Con gli altri eletti da la tua pietade.  
Quest'è la scala, c'ha condott'al Cielo  
    Un numero, un'essercito di Santi,  
    Per godersi in eterno  
    Quel che non vide occhio giamai nel velo  
    Di questa carne; e non inteser quanti,  
    (Certo che'l ver discerno)

Who will lead us to the high Majesty  
    If holy Humility does not lead us there?  
Come then, into my heart, and take up lodging  
    Most humble son of Mary;  
    And imprint yourself piously  
    Of holy Humility the virtue, without which,  
    In Heaven this soul of mine will never go.  
    Of this I am desirous:  
    To enjoy you in glorious eternity  
    Alongside others chosen by your piety.  
These are the stairs that have led to Heaven  
    A number, an army of Saints,  
    To enjoy for eternity  
    That which the eye never sees in the veil  
    Of this flesh; and sees not how many,  
    (Certainly to see it clearly)

D'intenderlo qua giù già prova ferno;  
 Che non comprende un cor cose si rade.  
 Questa trasse dal Ciel'a prender carne  
 Da i puri Sangui di Maria, il figliuolo  
 Del Re del Paradiso.  
 Questa ci comandò il Signor per darne,  
 Lontani d'ogni angoscia, e d'ogni duolo,  
 In Ciel perpetuo riso.  
 Questa ci mostrerà il sereno viso  
 Un dì de la divina Maestade.

To understand what is already down in Hell;  
 Such rare things a heart cannot comprehend.  
 This comes from Heaven to take flesh  
 From the pure Blood of Mary, the son  
 Of the King of Paradise.  
 This our Lord commanded us, to give  
 Far from every anguish, and every pain,  
 A perpetual smile unto Heaven.  
 This serene face displays to us  
 One day of our divine Majesty.

Day 3: Nicandro / La santa solitudine

Chiunque si ritira  
 Da i rumori del mondo,  
 Spesso gli eccessi suoi piange, e sospira.  
 Chi potria dir' a pien qual sia il contento  
 Di colui, che romito  
 L'alte cose del Ciel contempla intento?  
 Chi ha la strada, e il bel sentier smarito  
 Di gire al Cielo, e spento  
 Quel lume, ch'altri mena a l'infinito  
 Sommo gaudio, e gradito;  
 Se ne vada al deserto,  
 Che d'indi il vero eterno ben si mira.  
 O santa Solitudine, ò ricetta  
 Non al reo, non al tristo,  
 Qual lingua potria dir, qual'intelletto  
 Intendere giamai, qual sia l'acquisto  
 Di colui, che con petto  
 Saldo, in te serve, e giorno, e nott'à Christo?  
 Dicalo il Ciel, che visto  
 Ha molte volte farsi  
 Adorno, onde Satan s'unge, e s'addira.  
 In te nascon le gemme, con cui poi  
 L'eterno Diadema  
 S'orna il Re de la gloria, e splend'a noi  
 Ne la celest'alma Città suprema.  
 Chi non amerà i tuoi  
 Felici chiostrì? E chi fia che non gema,  
 E non brami l'estrema  
 Hora fornir ne i cari  
 Albergi tuoi, s'indi a ogni ben s'aspira?  
 O tre, ò quattro volte avventurati  
 Voi, che per gir'al Cielo  
 Habitast'i deserti abbandonati,  
 Quivi soffrendo fame, caldo, e gelo.  
 O felici, ò beati  
 Mentre cangiaste co i costumi il pelo;

Anyone who retreats  
 From the noises of the world,  
 Often bewails his excesses, and sighs.  
 Who can say fully what will be the contentedness  
 Of this man, who as a hermit  
 Contemplates the highest things of Heaven?  
 He who has lost the road, and the path  
 Going toward Heaven, and has extinguished  
 That light, which leads toward the infinite  
 Highest happiness, and has appreciated it;  
 He will go to the desert, and from there  
 He will see the true eternal good.  
 O holy Solitude, received  
 Not from evil, not from sadness,  
 What tongue could say, what intellect  
 Could ever understand the attainment  
 Of he who, with a stable heart,  
 Serves you both day and night in Christ?  
 Tell it to the Heavens, that has seen  
 Many times one make himself adorned,  
 Where Satan oils himself, and sees it fit.  
 In you are hidden the jewels, with which is made  
 The eternal Crown, with which the King  
 Of glory adorns himself, and shines on us  
 In the celestial soul, the supreme City.  
 Who will not love your  
 Happy cloisters? And who will not lament,  
 And not crave the extreme  
 Hour to build in your dear  
 houses, if one aspires to every good?  
 Three or four times, you should try  
 To ascend to Heaven.  
 You would live in the abandoned deserts,  
 There suffering hunger, heat, and cold.  
 O happy ones, o blessed ones,  
 While you change your skin in costumes;

E con pietoso zelo  
 Serviste al Re superno  
 Ch'ogn'anima devota ama, & ammira.  
 Deh potess'io, lassando il mondo infido,  
 Seguir de i vostri piedi  
 Le sant'orme, c'han già perpetuo grido  
 Fra i figliuoli di Dio, fra i grandi heredi  
 Del Cielo, in cui m'affido.  
 Deh tu, che servir te doni, e concedi,  
 E che'l mio affetto vedi,  
 Dammi, signor, ch'io scampi  
 Da l'ultimo tremendo dì de l'ira.

And with pious zeal  
 You would serve the supernal King  
 That every devoted soul loves and admires.  
 I could, upon leaving the unfaithful world,  
 Follow in your footsteps  
 The holy traces, where the perpetual scream  
 Among the sons of God, among the grand  
 Heirs of the Heavens, in which I trust.  
 You, who, to serve, give and concede yourself,  
 And to witness my affection,  
 Allow me, oh Lord, that I may escape  
 From wrath on the last tremendous day.

#### Day 4: Teodoro / L'oratione

Chi vuol parlar con Dio  
 Sciolga la lingua con devotione,  
 E faccia al suo Signor' Oratione.  
 E chi vuol semp'orar, sempre mai faccia  
 Opere buone, opere sante, e belle,  
 Opere di salute.  
 O suprema, ò ineffabile virtute,  
 Che varcand'oltre il giro dele stelle  
 Fai, che con lieta faccia  
 Ci riceva, e ci abbraccia  
 Di tutte le cagioni la cagione  
 Con gioia tal, che nol sa dir sermone.  
 Non potria mai lingua mortal à pieno  
 Narrar quanto sia grande la dolcezza,  
 Che sente colui, ch'ora.  
 Però che questa s'alza ad hora, ad hora  
 Con cor devoto a la supern'altezza,  
 E quindi poi nel seno  
 Di Dio si posa, e in meno  
 Ch'io nol dico, e nel capo intentione,  
 Beato gode eterna visione.  
 La sant'oration da un puro core,  
 E fedel; quasi incenso, che da santo  
 Altare s'erga, al Cielo  
 S'inalza; e giunt'avanti al sommo zelo,  
 A la sua Maestà piace cotanto  
 Col suo soave odore,  
 Ch'impetra con fervore,  
 Che figli d'ira, e di perdizione  
 Sian fatti figli di salvatione.  
 Questa con gran virtù vince l'antico  
 Prencipe delle tenebre d'abisso  
 Mentre con pur'affetto.  
 Devoti, e humili alzamo l'intelletto

He who wishes to speak with God  
 Dissolves his tongue with devotion,  
 And makes holy Oration unto his Lord.  
 And he who wishes to pray always, always does  
 Good deeds, saintly and beautiful deeds,  
 Deeds of health.  
 O supreme, o ineffable virtue,  
 That goes beyond the perimeter of the stars  
 Does it, so that with a happy face  
 It would receive us, and embrace us  
 Of all the causes, the cause  
 With such joy, that one cannot sermonize it.  
 The mortal tongue could never fully  
 Narrate the magnitude of the sweetness,  
 That he who prays, feels.  
 However, this sweetness rises hourly with a  
 Devout heart to meet the supernal highness,  
 And therefore, in the chest  
 Of God he puts himself, and in less  
 That I want to say, and in the best intention,  
 Blessed, he enjoys eternal vision.  
 Holy Oration coming from a pure,  
 Faithful heart, almost burning, that from the  
 holy Altar builds itself toward the Heavens,  
 Rises up; and nearing the highest zeal,  
 Pleases the Majesty so much  
 With its light scent,  
 That begs with fervor,  
 That the sons of wrath, and of perdition  
 Will be made sons of salvation.  
 This, with great virtue, will win over the ancient  
 Prince of the shadows in the abyss  
 While, with a pure affect, devout,  
 And humble we will raise the intellect

A pregar lui, che fu nel tronco affisso  
 De l'alta Croce, i dico  
 Giesù si nostr'amico;  
 Onde scornato con confusione  
 Fugge, e si fugge ogni tentatione.  
 O mille volte felici, e beati  
 Color, che t'hanno, e non ti lassan mai,  
 Mentre vivon qua giù terrena vita  
 Felici, e aventurati  
 Se teco versan grati  
 Fiumi correnti di compunzione,  
 E teco cangian vita, e conditione.  
 Oriam, dunque, con lagrime devote  
 Con lagrime di vera penitenza  
 Il celeste Monarca;  
 Che come non fu mai stretta, ne parca  
 La sua Pietà, la sua santa Clemenza,  
 Così pietoso note  
 Le nostre inferme note;  
 Ch'orando noi senz'intermissione,  
 Forz'è, che'l regno suo lieto ci done.  
 us.

Day 5: Gherardo / La santa povertade

Che sono le ricchezze,  
 Se non pungenti avelenate spine,  
 Che menan l'alme a disperato fine?  
 Chi vuol con puro cor, con pur'affetto  
 Servir'al Dio de le ricchezz'eterne,  
 Fugga queste fallaci  
 Del miser mondo, e innalzi l'intelletto  
 A l'acquisto di quelle sempiterno,  
 Beate, alme, e varaci,  
 Che non sono fuggaci,  
 Ma si stanno con noi sere, e mattine  
 Di queste di qua giù Donne, e Reine.  
 Il dispregio di queste, che son'ombra  
 De le vere ricchezze, fà beato  
 Chiunque le disprezza;  
 Ma chi di quelle l'animo s'ingombra,  
 Non pur non è da quelle consolato,  
 Ma si vive in tristezza.  
 Senton sempre amarezza  
 L'anime ingorde, perche le divine  
 Copie, fan lor del Cielo Cittadine.  
 Non teme il Ciel'irato, e non fà stima  
 De le grandini spesse, e de le pioggie  
 L'allegro poverello.

To pray to him, who was affixed to the part  
 Of the high Cross, I say  
 that Jesus is our friend;  
 Whence, humiliated with confusion  
 One flees, and flees every temptation.  
 O, one thousand times happy and blessed are those  
 Who have you, and never leave you,  
 While they live an earthly life down here.  
 Happy, and adventurous  
 And grateful they turn themselves to you  
 As rivers flowing with compunction,  
 And so change their life, and their condition.  
 Let us pray, therefore, with devout tears,  
 With tears of true penitence,  
 to the celestial Monarch;  
 As His Piety and Clemence never waned,  
 nor was frugal,  
 How pious he is to note  
 Our weak refrains;  
 That we, praying without intermission,  
 May it be, that his happy reign he will gift

What are riches,  
 If not stinging, poisoned thorns,  
 That lead the soul to a desperate end?  
 He who wants, with a pure heart and a pure affect,  
 To serve the God of eternal riches,  
 Flee from the fallacies of this  
 Miserable world, and raise your intellect  
 To the acquisition of those eternal riches,  
 Blessed and genuine souls,  
 That are not fleeing,  
 But which stay with us day and night  
 For these women, and queens down here.  
 The disparagement of these riches, which are shades  
 Of the real riches, will make blessed  
 Whoever disparages them;  
 But he who encumbers his soul with these,  
 Not only is not consoled by them,  
 But lives in sadness.  
 They feel eternal bitterness,  
 Those greedy souls, because the divine  
 Abundances make them citizens of Heaven.  
 He does not fear the wrathful Heavens, and  
 Does not honor the thick hails, and the rains,  
 That happy poor man.

Si contenta di star ne la part'ima.  
Non va cercando, ove il suo corpo alloggie  
Ricco pomposo hostello,  
Tutto gli è buono, e bello.  
Non sente danni mai, mai le ruine  
Non fan del viver suo l'hore meschine.

He is content to stay in the lowest part.  
He does not search where his body lives  
In a rich, pompous, hostel,  
Everything is good and beautiful for him.  
He does not feel harm, nor ruin,  
And does not let evil corrupt his living.

Day 6: Panfilo / L'avaritia

Quest'abisso vorace, e questa fiera,  
Che s'ingola ogni cosa;  
Scorre per tutti i cor pront'e leggiera.  
Questa non cura, nè men teme Dio,  
Non ama i frati suoi, non ama i figli,  
Ma sempre con ingordo animo rio,  
Quasi arpia, gitta i suoi rapaci artigli;  
E studia sempre come s'assotigli.  
Non dorme, e non si posa  
Intent'à l'oro, ò sia mattino, ò sera.  
Quai non tenta pericoli? Quai mari  
Non solca audace, e temeraria, solo  
Per accrescere in numero i danari?  
Ingorda vada da l'uno, à l'altro Polo,  
Non sent'affanno mai, non sente duolo,  
Purche truovi l'ascosa  
Terra gialla, in ricchissima miniera.  
Languisce il Dio de la gloria in un meschino,  
Che l'uccide la fame, e agghiaccia il gelo;  
E se lo vede quest'empia vicino,  
E non conosce in lui il Fattor del Cielo;  
Perche senza pietade, e senza zelo  
Dispietata non osa  
Aiutar quel meschin'onde non pera.  
Fuggasi quest'ingiurie, e questa Lupa  
Che non pur chiuso tien ciò, c'ha sotterra;  
Ma le sostanze altrui rubando occupa,  
Quai poscia sotto mille chiavi serra.  
Di gir'al Ciel'in van s'affanna, & erra  
Quell'anima rittrosa,  
Che sol ne l'oro, e ne le gemme spera.

This voracious abyss, and this beast  
That swallows all things,  
Runs through all hearts, fast and light.  
She does not care, nor does she fear God,  
She loves neither her brothers nor sons,  
But always, with a greedy, evil soul,  
As if a Harpy, extends her rapacious claws;  
And thinks constantly how to be craftier.  
She does not sleep, nor does she rest  
Intent on gold, whether morning or night.  
What dangers does she not brave? What oceans  
Does she not cross, audaciously and boldly,  
Solely to increase the mass of her riches?  
Greedily she passes from one pole the other,  
Not feeling fatigue, not feeling pain,  
All to find the hidden  
Yellow earth, in richest mine.  
The glory of God languishes in a wretched pauper,  
Whom hunger kills, and ice freezes;  
And if the impious beast sees him nearby,  
And sees not the Creator of the World,  
Because she is pitiless, and without zeal,  
Pitiless, she does not dare  
To help that wretch not to perish.  
Flee these harms, and this She-Wolf  
Who not only keeps buried what she has;  
But robs and keeps the goods of others,  
And locks them with a thousand keys.  
Vainly she reaches for Heaven, and  
Wanders, that stubborn soul,  
Who puts her hope alone in gold and gems.

Day 7 (in Introduction): Chrisogono

Quelle spine, quei chiodi, e quella Croce  
Giesù, che con crudel'empio martire  
T'hanno fatto morire,  
Son'i nostri pensier, l'opre, e la voce.  
Signor, quei t'han confitto  
Nel durissimo legno,

Those thorns, those nails, and that Cross,  
Jesus, that with a cruel, impious martyr  
They made you die,  
Are our thoughts, our deeds, and our voice.  
Lord, these things confined you  
To the hardest wood,

Dove con duol indegno  
 T'ha il sommo Padre stesso derelitto.  
 Siano un fascio di mirra queste cose  
 Ne' nostri cor'ascose;  
 E cangino i pensier, l'opre, e la voce  
 Le tue spine, i tuoi chiodi, e la tua Croce.

Where, with shameful regret,  
 The highest Father abandoned you.  
 These things will be a bundle of myrrh  
 In our hidden hearts;  
 And your thorns, your nails, and your Cross  
 Change our thoughts, our deeds, our voice.

Day 7: Crisippo / L'elemosina

Mille volte beato  
     Sarà colui, che con pietosa mano  
     Non sarà verso i poverelli ingrato.  
 Non pate l'elemosina c'huom caggia  
     Ne le tenebre oscure  
     D'inferno, ma quel libera da morte;  
     E lo conduce ove risplende, e raggia  
     Il vero Sol con pure  
     Luci serene, à la superna corte.  
     O quanto sono accorte  
     Quelle destre, che con affett'humano  
     Havranno qualch'afflitto consolato.  
 Però che mentre si dà a quel meschino  
     Queste cose terrene,  
     Si riceve nel Cielo i premi eterni.  
     Quest'è sicuro, e felice camino  
     Per fuggir quelle pene,  
     Che si paton ne i fuochi sempiterni  
     Fra gli aggiacciati verni  
     D'abisso; questo ne mena, lontano  
     Da gli horrori, al superno innamorato.  
 Stende Christo la man sotto l'aspetto  
     Di povero mendico,  
     E si degna ricevere in se stesso  
     Ciò che gli dona con pietoso affetto  
     Quel di pietade amico.  
     Perche, misero me, non mi è concesso,  
     Come lo farei spesso,  
     Di poter farlo? Ah che pur bramo in vano,  
     Di nutrir Christo in povero affamato.  
 Hora chi vuol da Dio'l celeste pane,  
     Che dà perpetua vita  
     Pien di diletto, e pien d'ogni sapore  
     Soave, a Christo dia le sue mondane  
     Sostanze. A ciò l'invita  
     Con caldo affetto il sempitern'amore.  
     Doni ogni peccatore  
     Al poverell'il pan s'esser vuol sano  
     De la ferita, che gli fè il peccato.

A thousand times blessed  
     Will be he who, with a pious hand,  
     Will not be ungrateful toward the poor.  
 The man who does not suffer almsgiving will fall  
     Into the dark shadows  
     Of Hell, but that liberates him from death;  
     And leads him to where the true Sun shines  
     And radiates with pure,  
     Serene light, onto the supernal court.  
     O, how wise are  
     Those clever ones, who, with humane affect  
     Will have any affliction cured.  
 However, while one gives to that cretin  
     These earthly things,  
     One receives in the Heavens eternal prizes.  
     This is a secure and happy path  
     On which to flee those pains,  
     Which one suffers in the eternal flames  
     Among the frozen caverns  
     Of the abyss; this leads one far from the  
     Horrors, toward the supernal beloved.  
 Christ reaches out his hand under the guise  
     Of a poor beggar,  
     And deigns to receive in himself  
     That which he gives, with pitying affect,  
     To a friend with piety.  
     Why, piteous me, am I not allowed.  
     As I would do often,  
     To do this? Ah, and yet I crave in vain,  
     To feed Christ in the guise of a hungry man.  
 He who wants to give the celestial bread from God,  
     Which gives perpetual life,  
     Full of delight, full of every sweet flavor,  
     To Christ he should give his worldly  
     Substances. To this he invites  
     With warm affect eternal love.  
     Every sinner should give bread  
     To the poor if he wants to be healed  
     Of the wound which gave him the sin.



[Note: the *brigata* rest for the next two days for religious observance and meditation.]

Day 8: Teofilo / La tribulatione

Chi con cor sofferente

Lieto sopporta ogn'aspro caso rio,  
Può creder d'esser molto caro a Dio.

Con la tribulation si pruova un core

Come l'oro col fuoco.  
Netta, purga, e raffina  
D'ogni soverchio ogn'anima il dolore,  
E quell'a poc'a poco  
Fà bella, e pellegrina.  
Quel che la medicina  
Fò con l'infermo con poter natio,  
Fò l'affanno a colui, ch'a Dio s'unio.

Però che'l mondo è quasi ampia fornace

De l'artefice eterno.  
Lui il giusto quasi oro  
Si purga, e l'empio affatto si disface  
Come paglia da interno  
Fuoco. Quivi il martoro  
Che tormenta costoro  
Opra, che lodi il suo Signor' il Pio,  
E che bestemmi il suo Fattor' il rio.

Santa tribulation, che ne fai santi

Nel Ciel'al Dio de' Dei;  
Se senza te non posso  
Giungere là, dove son giunti tanti,  
E dove tu non sei;  
Mi sia sempre percosso  
Dà te la faccia, e il dosso.  
Per ciò te bramo, e per ciò te desio  
Pur c'habbia poscia il dolce Signor mio.

He who, with a suffering heart,

Happily tolerates every bitter, guilty case,  
Can believe himself to be very dear to God.

With tribulation one tests the heart

As gold is tested in the fire.<sup>312</sup>  
It cleanses, purges, and refines  
Every soul of all excess and pain,  
And that slowly, slowly  
Makes it beautiful, and foreign.  
That which medicine will do with  
The sick man with innate power, pain will  
Do to he who unites himself with God.

For the world is like a large furnace

Of the eternal artificer.  
He, the just one, seems to purge himself  
Of gold, and the evil one undoes it  
Like hay from eternal  
Fire. Thence the marten  
Who torments those men  
Works, that he lauds his Lord for the Pious,  
And curses his Creator for the evil.

Holy tribulation, which makes saints

In the Heavens to the God of Gods;  
If, without you, I cannot  
Reach that place, where many are gathered,  
And where you are not;  
I will be forever beaten  
By you in the face, and on the back.  
This I yearn and this I desire for you  
Even if you take the place of my Lord.

Day 9: Chrisogono / La patientia

Apri le porte de l'eterno regno

La patientia vera, e l'huomo face  
De i beni di lassù goditor degno.

Il patiente volontier per Christo

Soffr'ogn'affanno, che gli reca il mondo,  
Le croci, il fuoco, le tanaglie, e il fondo  
D'aspra prigione; e sol per far'acquisto

True patience opens the doors to the eternal realm

And man, makes himself worthy enjoyer  
Of its goods down there.

The patient one voluntarily, for Christ,

Suffers every pain that the world gives him,  
The crosses, fire, the pincers, and the bottom  
Of a bitter prison; only to make a purchase

---

<sup>312</sup> Zechariah 13:9: "This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"

Di quel ch'occhio mortal mai non ha visto,  
 (Cosi la carità di Dio lo sface)  
 Corre anco a morte senz'alcun ritegno.  
 Questo s'impara ne la vera scola  
 Del Redentor del mondo, che per noi  
 Con patientia si fece huomo, e poi  
 Ne' suoi martir non disse una parola.  
 O virtù trionfante, unica, e sola  
 Per soggiogar' il mondo empio, e fallace,  
 D'ogni nostro sperar non picciol pegno.  
 Ahi chi non ha questa virtù preclara  
 E' quasi huom disarmato frà uno stuole  
 Di suo' armati nimici, che con duole  
 Cercan privarlo de la vita cara.  
 Con quest'i fieri colpi si ripara  
 De i nimici d'abisso; e questa tace  
 Fin'ch'ella arriva al desiato segno.  
 La santa Patientia fà al core  
 Quel che'l timone suol far'a la Nave,  
 Che si com'ella alcun timor non have  
 Mentre scorre lo mar con lungo errore  
 Per godersi nel porto liete l'hore;  
 Così questa virtù con gioia, in pace  
 Conduce al porto il travagliato legno.

Of that which the mortal eye has never seen,  
 (As such the charity of God undoes it)  
 He runs toward death without any restraint.  
 This one learns in the true school  
 Of the Redeemer of the world, who for us  
 Made man with patience, and then  
 In his martyrdom said not a word.  
 O triumphant virtue, unique and alone in  
 Beating this impious and fallacious world,  
 Of all of our hope you are not a small pawn.  
 Ah, he who does not have this clear virtue  
 Is almost an unarmed man among a crowd  
 Of his armed enemies, that takes pains  
 Trying to deprive him of his dear life.  
 He takes refuge from the harsh blows  
 From the enemies of the abyss; and it stops  
 Only when she arrives at the desired sign.<sup>313</sup>  
 Saintly Patience does to the heart  
 That which the compass does to the Ship,  
 That, if the ship does not have any compass  
 While it skims over the sea long in error  
 To enjoy the happy hours at the port;  
 So this virtue with joy, in peace,  
 Conducts the tormented wood to the port.

#### Day 10: Cirillo / La santa beatitudine

Qual potria mai mortal'huomo serrare  
 Con senno, ò con virtute  
 In picciol vetro gli abissi del mare?  
 Qual fornito intelletto  
 Potria intender la gloria de' beati?  
 Ah che più agevolmente  
 In un vaso ben stretto  
 Si chiudrebbon gli Occeani smisurati,  
 Che capir con la mente  
 La gloria di color, ch'eternamente  
 Godon gioie compiute  
 In Ciel con l'alme a Dio gradite, e care.  
 A una cosa infinita  
 Non si può assegnar fine, ed un'immensa  
 Non comprende misura.  
 O voi, ch'eterna vita  
 Godet'in Ciel con caritat'accensa;  
 Ch'è la vostra ventura,  
 Se non lieti fruir l'eterna cura,  
 E con piena salute

Which mortal man could ever enclose,  
 With judgment, or with virtue,  
 In a small glass the abysses of the sea?  
 What well-equipped intellect  
 Could understand the glory of the blessed?  
 Ah, so much more easily,  
 In a very narrow vessel,  
 One could encapture the vast Oceans,  
 Than grasp with the mind  
 The glory of those, who eternally  
 Enjoy the complete delights in Heaven  
 With the accepted, dear souls of God.  
 To an infinite thing one cannot  
 Assign a limit, and an immense thing  
 Does not comprehend bounds.  
 Oh you, who enjoy in Heaven  
 Eternal life with ignited charity;  
 What is your destiny, if you  
 are not happy to make use of eternal care,  
 And in full health,

---

<sup>313</sup> “ella” = Patientia.

Quel che fruito più non sospirare?  
 Felice compagnia  
 De' Cittadin superni; e gloriosa  
 Letitita di coloro,  
 Che per diritta via  
 Tornan da questa vita faticosa  
 A l'eterno ristoro.  
 Quai melodie, quai canti in un sol choro  
 Il Trono, e la Virtute  
 Fanno con note armoniose, e rare?  
 Non vide occhio giamai,  
 Nè ascoltò orecchio, nè in cor d'huomo ascese  
 Quel che'l gran Dio de' Dei  
 Cinto d'eterni rai  
 Ha preparato a chi gli fu cortese.  
 Deh Signor tu che sei  
 La gloria de' beati, e ch'anco bei  
 L'anime, hormai si mute  
 Questo nostro sì lungo desiare.

That which you enjoy you can not breathe?  
 Happy is the company  
 Of supernal Citizens; and glorious  
 Is the happiness of those  
 Who, by means of a straight path,  
 Turn from this strenuous life  
 Toward eternal restoration.  
 What melodies, what songs in a sole chorus,  
 Can the Throne, and the Virtue  
 Make with harmonious, and rare notes?  
 Eye has not seen,  
 Ear has not heard, nor in the heart has risen  
 That which the great God of Gods,  
 Girded by eternal rays, has prepared  
 For he who was gracious to Him.<sup>314</sup>  
 Oh Lord, you who are  
 The glory of the blessed, and the beautiful  
 Souls, now quiets itself:  
 This, our long-time desire.

---

<sup>314</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

### Appendix B: Table of Characters and their Servants

<b>Boccaccio narrator</b>	<b>Servant</b>	<b>Dionigi narrator</b>	<b>Servant</b>
Pampinea	Misia (cucina)	Nicostrato	Giannotto (credentiero)
Fiammetta	Stratilia (d camere)	Cirillo	Bambetta (cucina)
Filomena	Licisca (cucina)	Crisippo	Amerigo (camere)
Emilia	n/a	Ugone	Pasquino (cucina)
Lauretta	Chimera (d camere)	Nicandro	Tiberio (tavole)
Neifile	n/a	Chrisogono	Ricciardo (camere)
Elissa	n/a	Panfilo	Manfredi (tavole)
Panfilo	Sirisco (spenditore)	Teofilo	Arrighetto (spenditore)
Filostrato	Tindaro (u camere)	Teodoro	Ruberto (tavole)
Dioneo	Parmeno (siniscalco)	Gherardo	Rinieri (siniscalco)

## Appendix C: The *rubriche* of the *Decamerone Spirituale*

### PRIMA GIORNATA

**Principe:** Nicostrato

**Tema:** (Tema libero)

**Canzone:** Ugone

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
1.1	Teofilo	Charity	Si ragiona della Carità, cioè, che cos'ella sia, e si loda. Si discorre etiandio sopra le parole dell'Apostolo quando disse, Ch'ella tolera, ch'ella crede, ch'ella spera, ch'ella soffre tutte le cose, e che mai non cade; e si dice della Carità di Christo verso gli huomini; e de i suoi santi verso la divina Maestà sua.
1.2	Chrisogono	The makings of "good" and "bad" Christians	Si parla del nome Christiano, e d'onde derivi si dice. Si biasmano i cattivi Christiani, e i lor malvagi costumi; Si mostra etiandio quai siano i buoni Christiani, e quai nò.
1.3	Crisippo	Loving one's enemies	Che dovemo non pur perdonare i nimici, che ci hanno offeso, ma ch'anche dovemo amar loro, e far lor bene nell'occorenze, e pregar per loro come fecero molti santi, si del vecchio, come del nuovo

			Testamento, e Christo medesimo.
1.4	Gherardo	The triplicate nature of peace	Si ragiona della pace, e si dice ciò ch'ella sia. Ch'ella è triplice, cioè ammacchiata, simulata, & ordinata. Si biasma la prima, e la s[e]conda, e si loda l'ultima.
1.5	Cirillo	Chastity	Che cosa sia Castità si ragiona; delle sue lodi si tratta; e com'ella s'habbia a mantenere si discorre con gli essempli, e con la dottrina de i santi, fuggendo la pratica delle femine.
1.6	Ugone	Drunkenness	Ch'è bruttissima cosa l'ubriachezza; e si biasmano grandemente gli ubriachi; e con essempli detestabili così del vecchio, come del nuovo Testamento si mostra, che deve esser grandemente fuggita da tutti gli huomini d'ogni sesso, e d'ogni età.

1.7	Teodoro	Lust	Si vitupera il vizio della Lussuria, e i suoi effetti si mostrano, e la sua bruttezza; ammonendo ciascuno con essempli a fuggirla con tutte le sue forze, e si dice come.
1.8	Nicandro	Sloth	Si discorre quanto sia dannevole, e quanti mali

			effetti cagioni l'Otio, insegnando con gli essemi, così delle cose sensate, come dell'insensate, come s'abbia a fare per fuggirlo.
1.9	Panfilo	Envy	Che cosa sia l'Invidia si dice, di quanti pessimi figliuoli sia Madre; di quanti mali, e di quante ruine sia cagione; & in vituperio di lei, e de gli invidiosi, con le sentenze de i Padri, molti biasmi si raccontano.
1.10	Nicostrato	Necessity of penitance	Si dice, Che ci è, dopò l'haver peccato, necessaria la Penitenza se volemo andar'al Cielo. Ciò ch'ella si dice di sentenza de i Padri, e gli utili, che ci arreca si ragiona; essortando ciascuno con gli essemi de i santi, così dell'antica, come della nuova Legge, a far de i suoi peccati penitenza prima ch'alla fine s'arrivi della vita presente.

## **SECONDA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Crisippo

**Tema:** L'umiltà

**Canzone:** Nicostrato

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
2.1	Chrisogono	Definition of humility	Si diffinisce ciò che sia Humiltà secondo S. Tomaso; e discorso che si è sopra dodeci gradi di lei secondo S. Benedetto, si tocca succintamente nella fine dell'Humiltà di Giesu Christo Signor nostro.

2.2	Teodoro	Humility vs. pride	Perche sia da tutti i fedeli fuggita la Superbia, vizio dirittamente contrario all'Humiltà, si dice ciò ch'ella sia; e dopo l'haver discorso sopra dodeci gradi di lei, s'ammonisce il peccatore con l'esempio di Christo all'Humiltà santa.
2.3	Nicostrato	Humility of the Virgin Mary	Con l'occasione di trattar dell'Humiltà grande della Vergine Madre di Giesu Christo, si dichiara l'Evangelo Missus est Angelus; e molte virtù, e molte lodi si dicono di essa Beatissima Madre.
2.4	Nicandro	St. Bernard, penitence, justice, and mercy	Ragionandosi intorno a tre gradi dell'Humiltà secondo il devoto Bernardo santo, si discorre della Penitenza, le sue parti, e i suoi effetti dicendosi,



			e si ragiona della Giustitia, e della Misericordia.
2.5	Cirillo	The double nature of Christian humility; St. John the Baptist	Si dice che l'Humiltà Christiana è doppia; sopra cui discorrendo si ragionano molte bonissime cose; e particolarmente dell'Humiltà di S. Giovan Battista Precursore, e delle sue lodi.
2.6	Ugone	St. Bernard	Si dimostra, che secondo Bernardo santo, contaminandoci la superbia del mondo con sette capi di lepra, ci bisogna con altrettante immersioni, per renderci netti, lavarci nel Giordano dell'Humiltà di Giesu Christo.
2.7	Teofilo	The saints of the OT	S'assimiglia ad alcune cose l'Humiltà S., e gli Humili; e con l'esempio de i Santi sì del vecchio Testame[n]to, come del nuovo, s'inanima i fedeli a questa vi[r]tù dell'Humiltà.
2.8	Panfilo	Saintly humility	Si ragiona confusamente dell'Humiltà santa, e dicendosi moltissime buone cose di lei, con molt'utile, e con

			molt'edificatione spirituale, di molti suoi buoni effetti si discorre.
--	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------

2.9	Gherardo	Humility of Christ	Si discorre in tutto il Ragionamento dell'Humiltà profundissima di Giesu Christo nostro Signore, onde si ragionano molti devoti pensieri, e molt'utili documenti.
2.10	Crisippo	Fasting	Si ragiona del digiuno, e si dice ciò ch'egli sia, perche fu instituito, come si debbia digiunare, e molti suoi buoni effetti si scuoprono; e con l'esempio di molt'huomini santi si persuade ogni fedele all'osservanza di lui.

### **TERZA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Chrisogono

**Tema:** La solitudine

**Canzone:** Nicandro

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
3.1	Teodoro	Definition of solitude and the sins of the city	Si dice cosa sia Solitudine, e quanto siano; si discorrono le sue lodi, e si biasmano etiandio l'occasioni de i peccati delle Città, mostrando, che sono

			stato favoriti ne i deserti da Dio molt'amici della Divina Maestà sua.
3.2	Nicostrato	The solitary are not alone nor miserable	Si dimostra, che s'ingannano coloro, che dicono, che l'huomo non può viver lungamente contento senza l'huomo, dicendo etiandio, che'l Solitario è misero dal detto del Savio
3.3	Crisippo	<i>Vita attiva vs. Vita contemplativa</i>	Con gli essempli della scala, e delle sue Spose di Giacobbe Rachelle, e Lia, si dice che cosa sia la vita Attiva, e la Contemplativa.
3.4	Teofilo	Solitary monks and hermits	Si toccano le qualità del Monaco Solitario, e insieme le sue lodi si dicono, lodandosi etiandio la Solitudine con gli essempli de i grandi del mondo, che per viver Solitarij, e romiti, le corone abbandonarono, e i Regni.
3.5	Panfilo	Continued lauds of solitude	Continuando le lodi della Solitudine, si ragiona sopra il verso del Salmo che dice, Quanto sono amabili i tuoi tabernacoli, ò Signore delle virtù. E s'assimiglia Pietro Damiano ad Elia

			Profeta. Con gli esempi di Danielle di Maria Vergine, e d'altri, s'invitano, persuadendo, al deserto tutti i desiderosi de i favori del Cielo.
3.6	Cirillo	Saints who lived in solitude	Per inamorar' i buoni della solitudine, e del deserto, si discorre sopra le vice d'alcuni santi solitarij, molte lor virtù trattando per dar' essempro all' operar bene nell'Eremo.
3.7	Ugone	The solitary life	S'assimiglia la vita solitaria spiritualmente a quattro cose, c'ha in se corporalmente la solitudine; & i solitarij, & i contemplativi per alcuni essemi sono assimigliati alla damma, cioè alla capra salvatica.
3.8	Nicandro	The mundane vanities of city life	Si iscuopre in qualche parte quanto siano dannose le Città, e le Cittadine conversationi a coloro, che desiderosi di servir' a Dio solitarij, e romiti hanno del tutto lassato il mondo, e le mondane vanità.
3.9	Gherardo	Civil/domestic solitude vs. that of farmers	Ragionandosi d'una civile, e domestica solitudine, si loda assai lo star' in villa; e l'essercitio dell'Agricoltura con gli

			esempi de i gradi, la quiete grande mostrando etiandio di coloro, che ritirati si stanno in villa.
3.10	Chrisogono	Silence	Si parla del Silentio per essere stato molt'osservato da i solitarij; e dicendosi delle sue lodi, si scuoprono molti buoni effetti di lui con gli esempi de gli huomini santi.

#### **QUARTA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Teodoro

**Tema:** L'oratione

**Canzone:** Teodoro

<b>Novella</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
4.1	Cirillo	Definitions and practice	Si diffinisce che cosa sia l'Oratione secondo i santi, e secondo i Grammatici. Quante siano l'orationi, ch'a Dio si fanno; s'a Dio, ò a i suoi santi, ò all'uno, & a gli altri si deve far l'oratione si dice, e come si dee fare etiandio.
4.2	Nicostrato	Practice; examples from Old and New Testaments	Si dice come, quanto, e con che postura di corpo s'habbia a far l'oratione con gli esempi, si del vecchio,

			come del nuovo Testamento, e di Giesu Christo medesimo.
4.3	Nicandro	Examples of saints	Si discorre medesimamente con gli esempi de i santi dell'uno, e dell'altro Testamento, Dove, e Quando s'habbia a far l'oratione.
4.4	Panfilo	Impediments	Si ragiona de gli impedimenti, che ci occorrono orando, onde si cagiona, che non semo essauditi; e come, e che s'habbia a domandare nell'oratione.
4.5	Crisippo	Admirable effects	Acchioche ciascuno s'iamori dell'essercitio dell'oratione, de gli ammirabili effetti di lei si ragiona.
4.6	Teofilo	Admirable effects of Holy Oration	Si seguita la presa materia di ragionare de gli effetti stupendi, & ammirabili dell'oration santa.
4.7	Ugone	Admirable effects and how it improves us	Si discorre, da gli effetti dell'oration santa intorno alle lodi di lei, e molte buone cose si ragionano per accenderci maggiormente in cosi giovevole essercitio.
4.8	Chrisogono	How to encourage the timid	Per inanimar'i tiepidi all'essercitio molto

			giovevole dell'oration santa, si mostra, che tutti i santi, così della vecchia, come della nuova Legge, l'hanno essercitata; e Christo medesimo con loro per nostro bene.
--	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4.9	Gherardo	Christian utility of oration	Con molta christiana utilità si discorre per chi s'habbia a far l'oratione.
4.10	Teodoro	Which orations please the Lord the most	Si tratta di quali orationi più si compiaccia il Signore, e si dichiara con l'occasione, e con l'autorità de i Padri l'Oratione Dominicale.

### **QUINTA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Cirillo

**Tema:** La Santa Povertade

**Canzone:** Gherardo

<b>Novella</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
5.1	Teofilo	Disdain for earthly riches	Si ragiona del disprezzo delle ricchezze mondane, e che si devono amare le ricchezze del Cielo stabili, e sempiterno.
5.2	Ugone	Selling one's belongings	Si dice come s'intendano quelle due sentenze dell'Evangelo,

			<p>che dice, Se tu vuoi esser perfetto, v'è, e vendi quel che possiedi, e dall'a i poveri; e l'altra, Che più facilmente entra una ben grossa corda in un picciol buco d'un'aco, ch'entri il ricco nel regno de i Cieli.</p>
5.3	Panfilo	Lauding poverty and the poor	<p>S[i] loda brevemente la povertà, &amp; i poveri con molt'utile christiano; e si persuade ciascuno al dispregio delle ricchezze del mondo, &amp; ad amar le celesti.</p>
5.4	Teodoro	St. Gregory	<p>Con sette capi, e con esempi, &amp; autorità si dimostra perche le ricchezze mondane siano dette spine, e siano assimigliate alle spine, poi che quelle dilettano, e quest'altre pungono, come dice Gregorio santo.</p>
5.5	Chrisogono	False riches of the world	<p>Con l'autorità de gli scrittori Ecclesiastici, e con l'esempio de i santi si ragiona del dispregio del mondo, e delle sue fallaci ricchezze.</p>
5.6	Nicostrato	Fleeing the material world	<p>S'assimiglia il mondo all'aere, al mare, al deserto, a una spelonca, a un ginepro, &amp; ad</p>



			un'ombra; e quindi poi con gli essempli de i santi si persuade a dispregiarlo, & a fuggirlo, come cosa dannosa, con tutte le forze.
5.7	Nicandro	Lauding poverty	Brievemente si dimostra con l'autorità, e con gli essempli, che non pure non è mala, ma ch'è ottima cosa la povertà.
5.8	Crisippo	The poor are dear to God	Seguendo si dimostra, ch'è buona la povertà, e che i poveri per esser buoni, sono cari, e gratiosi alla Divina Maestà del Padre eterno.
5.9	Gherardo	The poverty of Christ	Con molto spirituale contento, e sodisfattione, brevemente si ragiona della povertà del figliuol di Dio Giesu Christo nostro Signore.
5.10	Cirillo	Miseries in this life and happiness in the next	Si tratta con molto proffitto, e con molt'utile delle miserie della presente vita; e della felicità della futura felice, e beata, si ragiona.

### SESTA GIORNATA

**Principe:** Panfilo

**Tema:** L'avaritia

**Canzone:** Panfilo

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
6.1	Crisippo	Definitions, effects, "offspring"	Si dice di sentenza de i Padri, Che cosa sia Avaritia, di quai cattivi effetti sia cagione; e di quanti pessimi figliuoli, e figliuole sia madre scelerata.
6.2	Nicostrato	St. Bernard and negative effects of avarice	Si continua il ragionar de i cattivi effetti dell'avaritia; quale posta ch'è sù il suo carro secondo Bernardo santo, si dà all'avaro qualche salutare rimedio perche non caggia nella perditione eterna.
6.3	Nicandro	Avarice as a monster	Si dimostrano le pazzie de gli avari, e quanto sia difformissimo monstro la avaritia.

6.4	Chrisogono	What this monster signifies	Si dichiara, e si mostra ciò che segnifichi questo monstro brutto, e spaventevole dell'avaritia, e si biasmano molto gli avari.
6.5	Teofilo	Other "children" of avarice	Continuando il pensiero del primo ragionamento, si discorre sopra altr'otto

			figliuole dell'avaritia, biasmando molto la crudeltà de gli avari.
6.6	Cirillo	Money	Si dimostra, che non è possibile, che gli huomini possano tanto acquistarsi delle terrene ricchezze, che si contentino; biasimando sempre con nuovi modi l'avaritia, e gli avari.
6.7	Teodoro	Evils springing from avarice	Continuando ne i biasimi dell'avaritia, si dice, che da lei nascono, come dal mare i fonti, tutti i mali; e si ragionano cose molt'utili.
6.8	Ugone	Avaricious tyrants and good Christian administrators	Si continua ne i biasimi dell'avaritia, e in parte si toccano i precetti, ch'ella dà a gli avari tiranni; e si dicono etiandio molti buoni ammaestramenti christiani.
6.9	Gherardo	Root of all evils	S'assimiglia l'avaritia alla cipolla, all'ombra, al fuoco del zolfo, a un lago, e finalmente, con molt'utile s'assimiglia alla radice conforme al detto dell'Apostolo, che la chiamò radice di tutti i mali.
6.10	Panfilo	Tithes	Standosi nelle maldicenze dell'avaritia, si biasima

			coloro, che per avaritia non vogliono dar'a Dio quell'ubidienza, che gli devono, che sono le Decime, intorno alle quali molte buone cose si discorrono.
--	--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### SETTIMA GIORNATA

**Principe:** Gherardo

**Tema:** L'elemosina

**Canzone:** Crisippo [Chrisogono sings in the Intro]

\*error: Panfilo narrates twice, once in place of Teofilo

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
7.1	Ugone	Definitions and practice	Si dice cosa sia l'Elimosina, di quante sorti ella sia; e a cui, e come ella debbia esser fatta si ragiona.
7.2	Teodoro	Practice	Si ragiona, che delle proprie sostanze, e non dell'altrui si dee far l'elemosina, e discredendosi sopra tre gradi di lei, si riprendono quei Cherici, che malvagiamente dispensano l'entrare delle lor Chiese.
7.3	<b>Panfilo*</b>	Good effects and uses	Si tratta de i mirabili, e stupendi effetti dell'Elimosina, & in qualche parte si toccano le sue importanti

			utilitati.
7.4	Nicandro	Continued lauds	Continuandosi di ragionar de gli effetti ammirabili dell'elemosina, si essort'ogn'uno al culto di lei in sovventione de i poverelli amici di Christo.
7.5	Cirillo	Examples of compassion and charity	Per inanimar'i fedeli maggiormente all'essertito gratioso dell'Elemosina, si mostra con gli essempi, che da tutti i gradi, ordini, e sessi è stat'essercitata questa lodevole compassione verso i bisognosi con molt'affetto, e con molta carità.
7.6	Nicostrato	Bad effects of forgoing this	Si discorre brevemente di quanto male sia cagione a i non limosinieri il non far l'elemosina.
7.7	Crisippo	Condemnation of earthly riches	Si riprendono gli huomini, che non prezzando le ricchezze del Cielo, più attendono a queste del mondo mancando nell'opere dell'Elemosina, e si ragionano molte buone cose, & utili per la salute.

7.8	Chrisogono	Excuses for not being charitable	Si discorre intorno alle scuse, ch'alcuni fanno per non far l'elemosina, e si dice chi la possa fare con buona coscienza.
7.9	<b>Panfilo*</b> (error; should be Teofilo)	What to consider	Intorno a quattro cose si discorre, che si devono considerare dell'Elemosina, cioè della cagione, del fine, del modo, e dell'ordine che si deve nel far l'Elemosina.
7.10	Gherardo	Examples of saints; perseverance	Con gli essempli de i Santi, e con l'autorità de gli Scrittori Ecclesiastici si ragiona della Perseveranza; e molt'utili cose si dicono di questa virtù.

### **OTTAVA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Nicandro

**Tema:** La Tribulatione

**Canzone:** Teofilo

Novella	Narrator	Basic Theme	Summary
8.1	Chrisogono	Definitions and examples	Discorrendosi, che cosa sia Tribulatione, e di quante sorti; con ottimi essempli si dicono cose di molt'utile, e di molto contento spirituale.
8.2	Teofilo	Necessity of tribulations	Si dice, che non solo è mala cosa il fuggir le

			tribulationi, ma ch'anche ci sono necessarie, è proffittevoli per quattro capi, se ben ci paiono molto gravi, penose, & amare.
8.3	Panfilo	No one is without trouble	Perche niuno è senza tribulatione in questo mondo, si mostra che gli huomini santi per arrivar'al Cielo hanno patito l'amare tribulationi di questo misero mondo bugiardo.
8.4	Ugone	Hell is worse	Si discorre in qualche parte le tribulationi par troppo acerbe di coloro, che sono confinati perpetuamente nella durissima carere d'inferno, e con molt'utile.
8.5	Teodoro	Good effects	Dopo l'haver ragionato delle tribulationi che patono gli huomini in questa vita, si mostra, che perche soffrimo patientemente per amor di Dio queste tribulationi, sono segni della nostra predestinatione; e che però devono, non solo esser sofferte volontieri da noi per amor suo; ma ch'anche devono esser bramate con tutto il

			cuore; mostrandosi etiamdio in qualche particella, ch'elleno sogliono bene spesso partorir bonissimi effetti.
8.6	Crisippo	Wondrous effects	Si ragiona de gli effetti mirabili, che cagionano le mondane tribulationi a gli huomini amici di Dio.

8.7	Nicostrato	Useful effects	Si continua il ragionar de gli effetti delle tribulationi stupendi, & ammirabili molto, e con molt'utile.
8.8	Cirillo	Disdain of worldly prosperity; flagellants	Si ragiona del disprezzo delle prosperità mondane, e dell'amor si dice etiamdio delle tribulationi, e de i flagelli di questo mondo.
8.9	Gherardo	Why people suffer	Si ragiona perche permetta Dio, che siano tribulati gli eletti, e gli amici della Divina Maestà sua; intorno a che si dicono cose molt'utili al Christiano.
8.10	Nicandro	Persecution	Con molt'utile spirituale, e con molto contento si ragiona della Persecutione, e che i Santi medesimi sono stati perseguitati.



## **NONA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Ugone

**Tema:** La patientia

**Canzone:** Chrisogono

<b>Novella</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
9.1	Crisippo	Definition of true/perfect patience; how it helps	Si diffinisce che cosa sia Patientia, qual sia le vera, e la perfetta patientia; come s'aiuti, e si mantenghi; e intorno a quella discorrendo, si dicono cose molt'utili, e molto belle.
9.2	Panfilo	Examples from OT and NT	Si mostra, che tutti gli amici di Dio dell'uno, e dell'altro Testamento hanno havuto questa virtù della patientia; e con gli essempli loro, e di Christo medesimo havendo inanimato ciascuno all'acquisto di tanto dono, si dimostra il modo etiandio brevemente d'acquistarlo.
9.3	Teodoro	The patience of Christ	Discorrendo della patientia indicibile di Giesu Christo Signor nostro, si ragionano molte cose nobili, & utili alla vita spirituale, e christiana.
9.4	Chrisogono	Examples of simple men	Con gli essempli de gli huomini semplici s'accende, discorrendo,

			ciascuno all'amor della santa virtù della patientia.
9.5	Cirillo	False and bad patience	Utilissimamente si ragiona de i cattivi pazienti, e della falsa patientia loro.
9.6	Teofilo	How to avoid false patience and follow true patience	Accioche s'impari di fuggir con agevolezza la dannosa patientia, e quella seguir, che ci fa felici, e beati; delle lodi, e de gli effetti mirabili della vera patientia, con molt'utile fin'alla fine discorrendo, si ragiona.
9.7	Nicostrato	Lauds of patience	Con gli essempli d'alcuni santi, e d'altri, si continua il ragionar delle lodi, e de gli effetti ammirabili della patientia santa.
9.8	Nicandro	Things that are similar	Si ragiona d'alcune similitudini, c'ha la santa virtù della patientia con l'oro, col Crisopasso d'Egitto, e con la rosa; e insieme si discorrono molte altre cose utili, e christiane.
9.9	Gherardo	(Cont'd.)	Si continua nelle similitudini, c'ha la virtù santa della patientia con alcune altre cose, cioè con l'Elice arbore, con l'Asino selvatico, e con l'herba etiandio, ch'è

			detta Cappari.
9.10	Ugone	The noble virtue of obedience	Si ragiona molt'utilmente, e con gli essempli, e con la dottrina de i santi, intorno alla virtù nobilissima, e christiana dell'Ubidienza.

### **DECIMA GIORNATA**

**Principe:** Teofilo

**Tema:** La beatitudine

**Canzone:** Cirillo

<b>Novella</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Summary</b>
10.1	Chrisogono	Definitions and examples	Si ragiona, che cosa sia la Beatitudine, in che consista, e quante siano si dice con l'autorità, e della scrittura, e de i Santi con molt'utile spirituale.
10.2	Panfilo	How to avoid torments and focus on happiness of Heaven	Accioche ogn'uno più agevolmente, per acquistar l'allegrezze del Cielo, fugga i pericoli de i tormenti d'abisso; de i gaudij, e dell'allegrezze celesti si ragiona con molto spirituale contento.
10.3	Teodoro	Lauds and benefits	Si ragiona dell'eccellenze della Beatitudini, e all'[a]cquisto di quella s'inanima ciascuno

			brevemente, e con poche parole.
10.4	Nicandro	True/perfect beatitude	Si dice delle Beatitudini mondane, cioè dove posero, e dove pongono molt'huomini del mondo la loro Beatitudine; e poi dove sia la vera, e la perfetta Beatitudine nostra, discorrendo si dice.
10.5	Ugone	How to obtain it	Si dice, che per acquistarsi la Beatitudine del Cielo, si deve con l'esempio de i Santi dispregiar quelle cose, dove hanno gli huomini d'hoggi poste le loro mondane beatitudini fallaci.
10.6	Cirillo	8 Beatitudes	Si discorre sopra l'otto beatitudini predicate da Giesu Christo a gli Apostoli nel monte, dove molte cose buone si vedono, e di molto profitto spirituale.
10.7	Nicostrato	Similar things to the 8 Beatitudes	L'otto beatitudini predicate da Giesu Christo s'assimigliano discorrendo ad alcuni venti, ò a gli effetti d'alcuni venti, con cui hanno conformità, e proportionone.
10.8	Crisippo	Comparisons	Con l'autorità della Scrittura, e de i Padri, si v'assimigliando la

			Beatitudine a dieci solenni conditioni d'una nobilissima, e sontuosissima Cena.
10.9	Teofilo	More comparisons	Si discorre come s'habbia a fare per conseguir le celesti vivande nella mensa di Christo, da che molto proffitto si cava, e molta spirituale diletatione si gusta.
10.10	Gherardo	Universal judgment	Con molt'horrore, e con molto spavento, servendosi sempre dall'autorità della scrittura, e de i Dottori Ecclesiastici, si ragiona intorno all'univerale Giuditio, che farà Giesu Christo nell'ultimo giorno del mondo.

## Appendix D: Female Names Mentioned in the *Decamerone Spirituale*

### Saints, Martyrs, and Biblical Figures

Name (in <i>DS</i> text)	Name (English)	Significance
Abigaille	Abigail	Wife of Nabal, then David
Agar	Hagar	Sarah's handmaid; bore Abraham children when Sarah could not
Agata	Agatha	Agatha of Sicily; virgin martyr
Agnese	Agnes	Third-century (C.E.) virgin martyr
Anna	Hannah	One of the wives of Elkanah (other wife: Peninnah)
Apollonia	Apollonia	Virgin martyr; patron saint of dentistry
Aristeneta	Aristeneta	Wife of a governor of Palestine; begged Saint Hilarion to cure her three sons of illness
Barbara	Barbara	Third-century (C.E.) virgin martyr
Betsabea	Bathsheba	Wife of Uriah, then King David; mother of Solomon
Catarina	Catherine (of Siena)	Patron (female) saint of Italy; 14th century
Christina di Tiro d'Italia	Christina	Christina the Great of Tyre (now Bolsena);

		virgin martyr; treated by Dionigi in a separate <i>sacra rappresentazione</i>
Cicilia	Cecilia	Martyred saint; patroness of musicians
Delila	Delilah	Woman who seduced Samson and cut his hair
Dina	Dinah	Daughter of Jacob and Leah; subject of a famous abduction (“Rape of Dinah”)
“Donna cananea”	Canaanite woman	Woman mentioned in Matthew 15; daughter is healed by Christ
“Donna eleutheropolitana”	Eleutheropolitan woman	Woman healed by Saint Hilarion
Dorotea	Dorothy/Dorothea	Dorothea of Caesarea, fourth-century (C.E.) virgin martyr
Drusiana	Drusiana	Woman from Pathmos; chaste wife of Andronicus; resurrected by John the Apostle
Elisabetta	Elizabeth	Mother of John the Baptist; patroness of pregnant women
Ester	Esther	Wife of King Ahasuerus after Vashti; Book of Esther; seen as model for successful rhetoric
Eutitia	Eutychia	Mother of Saint Lucy
Eva	Eve	First woman

Fenenna	Peninnah	One of the wives of Elkanah
Iezabelle	Jezebel	Queen mentioned in 1 Kings; promoted worship of false idols and prophets, blasphemy, cosmetic beauty (falseness)
Juditta	Judith	Jewish woman who seduces Holofernes (general of Nebuchadnezzar) and beheads him
Lia	Leah	One of Jacob's two wives; older sister of Rachel
Lucia	Lucy	Virgin martyr; patron saint of the blind
"La malvagia moglie di Futifarre"	(unnamed)	Wife of Putifarre (unnamed in Bible)
Margarita	Margaret	Known as Margaret the Virgin or Saint Marina the Great Martyr, fourth century C.E.
Maria	Mary of Bethany	Sister of Martha and Lazarus; sometimes confused with Mary Magdalene
Maria	Mary of Egypt	Also known as Maria Aegypticus
Maria Magdalena	Mary Magdalene	Penitent sinner, former (reformed) prostitute
Maria Vergine	Virgin Mary	Virgin mother of Christ



Marta	Martha	Sister of Mary (of Bethany) and Lazarus; sainted
Miriam	Miriam	Sister of Moses; prophetess
“Le Moabitide, l’Ammonitide, l’Idumee, le Sidonie, le Cethee”	Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Zidonian, and Hittite women	List of foreign women King Solomon loved (1 Kings 11)
“Moglie di Lot”	Wife of Lot	Unnamed woman in the Bible; turned into a pillar of salt while fleeing Sodom
“Moglie di Profeta Davide”	Prophet David’s wife	Could be Michal, Bathsheba, Avital, Haggith, Maacah, Ahinoam, Abigail, or Eglah
Monica	Monica	Saint; mother of Saint Augustine of Hippo
Priscilla	Priscilla	First-century (C.E.) missionary under Saint Paul; married to Aquila
Rachelle	Rachel	One of Jacob’s two wives; younger sister of Leah
Rebecca	Rebecca	Wife of Isaac, mother of Jacob and Esau
Ruta	Ruth	Moabite woman; Book of Ruth
Salome	Salome	Daughter of Herod II; famous for beheading John the Baptist

Salome (disciple)	Salome	Known as one of the “Three Marys”; mother of two apostles: “madre de i figliuoli di Zebedeo, Giovanni, e Giacomo” ( <i>DS</i> )
Saphira	Sapphira	Wife of Ananias; allegedly died suddenly after lying to the Holy Spirit about money
Sara	Sarah	Wife of Abraham
Sara	Sarah	daughter of Raguel and Edna (“Anna” in <i>DS</i> ), wife of Asmodeus
Susanna	Susanna(h)	Susannah and the Elders; story in Book of Daniel
Tabitha	Tabitha or Dorcas	Female disciple mentioned in Acts of the Apostles
Taide	Thaïs	Fourth-century (C.E.) saint; repentant courtesan; called “meretrice d’Egitto” in <i>DS</i>
Tecla	Thecla	Virgin martyr; alleged follower of Saint Paul
Teodosia	Theodosia	Seventh- or eighth-century martyr from Constantinople
Reina Vasti	Queen Vashti	Wife of Persian King Ahasuerus in Book of Esther

“Le purissime Verginelle...”	All virgin female saints	
------------------------------	--------------------------	--

### Mythological Figures

Name (in <i>DS</i> text)	Name (English)	Significance
Cerere	Ceres	Roman goddess of agriculture
Elena	Helen (of Troy)	Said to be the most beautiful woman alive; her kidnapping started the Trojan War
Sibilla Eritrea	Erythraean Sibyl	Ancient prophetess; foretold the divine parentage of Alexander the Great; also appears in Boccaccio’s <i>De mulieribus claris</i>
Sibilla Tiburtina	Tiburtine Sibyl	Ancient Roman prophetess
Venere	Venus	Roman goddess of love and beauty
Le Driade, le Napee, le Ninfe	Dryads, Napaeae, Nymphs	Wood, forest and tree nymphs

### Historical Figures

Name (in <i>DS</i> text)	Name (English)	Significance
Aglæ	Aglæ	Wife of Euphemianus, mother of Alessio (“nobile Romano”)
Aleta	Aleth	Mother of Saint Bernard

Cleopatra	Cleopatra	Famous Egyptian pharaoh
Lucretia	Lucretia	Roman woman whose history was recounted by Livy
“Madre di Stefano Prete Constantinopolitano”	Eudokia Ingerina	Mother of Patriarch Stephen I of Constantinople; Byzantine empress consort
Miliana	Miliana	Noble daughter of a Roman consul
Radegunde	Radegund	Sixth-century Frankish queen and saint
“La sorella di Bernardo santo”	Humbeline	Sister of Saint Bernard (not mentioned by name in <i>DS</i> )
Zantippe	Xanthippe	One of Socrates’ wives, known for being excessively naggy
“Zia del Magno Gregorio Papa”	Tarsilla	Aunt of (Pope) Saint Gregory I; was also canonized

#### Other/Unknown

1. Unnamed rich woman, p. 433
2. Unnamed woman, p. 501
3. “Una certa vecchiarella d’Alessandria”, p. 538
4. Unnamed woman, p. 548

## Works Cited and Consulted

### Primary Sources

Alighieri, Dante. *La divina commedia*. Edited by Natalino Sapegno, "La Nuova Italia," 1956–57.

Amiani, Pietro-Maria. *Memorie storiche della città di Fano*. Fano: Giuseppe Leonardi, 1751. 2 vols.

Ariosto, Ludovico. *Orlando Furioso*. G. Barbèra, 1934–35.

Bandiera, Alessandro. *Gerotricamerone ovvero Tre sacre giornate, nelle quali s'introducono dieci virtuosi, e costumati giovani, a recitare in volta ciascuno, per modo di spiritual conferenza, alcuna narrazion sacra. Opera d'Alessandro M. Bandiera sanese de' Servi di Maria*. Venezia: Tommaso Bettinelli, 1745.

Berni, Francesco. *Orlando innamorato composto già dal. S. Matteo Maria Boiardo Conte di Scandiano, Et hora rifatto tutto di nuovo da M. Francesco Berni*. Venezia: Con privilegio dell'[Il]lustris. Senato Veneto, 1545.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Corbaccio*. Translated and edited by Anthony K. Cassell, U of Pennsylvania P, 1975.

---. *Decameron*. Edited by Vittore Branca, Einaudi, 1992. 2 vols.

---. *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*. Edited and translated by Mariangela Causa-Steindler and Thomas Mauch, U of Chicago P, 1990.

Boiardo, Matteo Maria. *Orlando Innamorato*. Edited by Andrea Canova, BUR Rizzoli, 2011.

Borghini, Vincenzo. *Il Decameron di messer Gioianni Boccacci cittadino fiorentino. Ricorretto in Roma, et emendato secondo l'ordine del sacro Conc. di Trento, et*

- riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi & alla sua vera lezione ridotto da'*  
*deputati di loro alt. ser. Nuouamente stampato.* Fiorenza: Giunti, 1573.
- Boscán, Juan. *Las obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilasso de la Vega.* Barcelona: de  
 Garles Amoros, 1543.
- Bowdler, Thomas. *The Family Shakspeare, in one volume; in which nothing is added to  
 the original text, but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with  
 propriety be read aloud in a family.* London: Longman, Brown, Green &  
 Longmans, 1847.
- Castiglione, Baldassare. *Il Cortegiano.* Edited by Giulio Preti, Einaudi, 1965.
- Ciccarelli, Antonio. *Il Cortegiano del Conte Baldassarre Castiglione. Riveduto, &  
 corretto da Antonio Ciccarelli da Fuligni, Dottore in Theologia.* Venetia: la  
 Minima Compagnia, 1593.
- Corradi, Alfonso. *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al  
 1850. Vol. 2. Parte seconda: Dal 1501 a tutto il 1600.* Bologna: Tipi Gamberini e  
 Parmeggiani, 1867.
- Crescimbeni, Giovanni Mario. *Comentarj del canonico Gio. Mario Crescimbeni custode  
 d'Arcadia, intorno all sua istoria della Volgar Poesia, volume quinto.* Roma:  
 Antonio de' Rossi, 1711.
- Croce, Giulio Cesare. *Rime compassionevoli e devote sovra la Passione, Morte e  
 Risurrezione di N. S. Gesù Cristo.* Viterbo: Martinelli, 1607.
- da Bologna, Valerio. *Prologo della amarissima e lagrimevole passione del nostro  
 redentore Gesu Cristo ad imitazione del primo capitolo del Triompho d'Amore di  
 Francesco Petrarca servando le medesime rime.* Venezia: N. Zoppino, 1529.

da Civitella, Feliciano Umbruno. *Dialogo del dolce morire di Giesu Christo sopra le sei visioni di m. Francesco Petrarca*. Venezia: Giovann'Antonio e Pietro Nicolini da Sabbio, 1544.

da Collalto (da Colcelalto), Goro. *Primo canto del Furioso, traslatato in spirituale*. Firenze: Francesco Tosi, alle Scalee di Badia, 1589.

de Córdoba, Sebastián. *Las obras de Boscán y Garcilaso trasladadas en materias christianas y religiosas*. Madrid: M. Murillo, 1875.

de' Medici, Girolamo Casio. *Vita, et morte di Giesu Christo ... ad imitatione di una canzone del Petrarca che comincia. Che debbio far, che mi consigli, o, amore*. Bologna: Cinzio Achillini, ~1525-1530.

de Navarre, Marguerite. *The Heptameron*. Translated by P. A. Chilton, Penguin, 1984.

de Voragine, Jacopo. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*. Translated by William Granger Ryan, Princeton UP, 1993. 2 vols.

di Lione, Gioan Battista. *L'Aminta di Torquato Tasso moralizzato; composta dal M. R. P. M. F. Gio. Batista di Lione da Santo Fede Minor Conventuale, e data in luce dal Rev. D. Lionardo Antonio di Leone*. Napoli: Francesco Benzi, 1691.

Dionigi da Fano, Francesco. *Amor cortese. Comedia noua pastorale di Francesco Dionisio da Fano*. Fano: Iacomo Moscardo, 1570.

---. *Il Decamerone Spirituale cioe le diece spirituali giornate del R. M. Francesco Dionigi da Fano. Nel quale si contengono cento famigliari ragionamenti detti in diece dì da diece devoti Giovani sopra molte nobili materie Spirituali*. Venice: gl'Heredi di Giovanni Varisco, 1594.

---. *Deuota representatione de i martirii di santa Christina vergine, e martire di Giesu*

*Christo di nuouo composta dal reuer.do m. Francesco Dionigi da Fano.* Fano: Pietro Farri, 1592.

---. *Echo divina septem vocibus respondens illustriss., ac reverendiss. d.d. Pompeo Arrigonio Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinali ... a fratre Augustino de Cortona.* Florentiae: apud Iuntas, 1609.

---. *Historia della vita del glorioso s. Paterniano vescouo, e protettore della città di Fano. Scritta in lingua italiana dal r.m. Francesco Dionigi. A spirituale consolatione di tutti i deuoti di questo santo. Aggiuntaui etiandio la sua translatione dalla chiesa di fuori nella noua chiesa nella città, con tutti i minuti particolari, che occorsero in quel tempo, cauati da scritture autentiche, e da molte memorie, che si fecero all'hora per dichiarazione del fatto, con la sacra etiandio di detta chiesa.* Fano: Pietro Farri, 1591.

*The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville.* Edited and translated by Stephen A. Barney, Cambridge UP, 2009.

Evitascandalo, Cesare. *Dialogo del maestro di casa.* Roma: Sulpicio Mancini, 1598.

Fiamma, Gabriele. *Rime spirituali del r.d. Gabriel Fiamma, canonico regolare lateranense esposte da lui medesimo.* Venezia: Francesco de' Franceschi Senese, 1570.

Fonte, Moderata. *Il merito delle donne, Scritto da Moderata Fonte in due giornate. Ove chiaramente si scuopre quanto siano elle degne, e più perfette de gli huomini.* Venetia: Domenico Imberti, 1600.

Franco, Niccolò. *Le pistole vulgari.* Venice: Antonio Gardane, 1592.

Gallucci, Agostino. *San Francesco, ouero Gerusalemme celeste acquistata, poema sacro.*



- Venice: Barezzo Barezzi, 1618.
- Ganimede, Panfilo. *Pianto al Crocefisso dai versi del Petrarca di Ganimede Pamphilo da Sanseuerino*. Roma: Antonio Blado, ~1543.
- Giambelletti, Pietro. *Canzone con due sonetti nell'ingresso d'un suo fratello nella religione de' cappuccini, ad imitazione di quella del Petrarca*. Modena: Giovanni Maria Verdi, 1600.
- Gioia, Melchiorre. "Cenni sulla pirateria libraria. Appendice terza al Nuovo Galateo." *Opere minori*, vol. XVII, Lugano: Ruggia, 1835, pp. 421-41.
- Graziano, Giulio Cornelio. *Di Orlando santo, Vita e morte, con venti mila Cristiani, uccisi in Roncisvalle, cavata dal Catalogo de' Santi*. Trevigi: Deuchino, 1597.
- Groto, Luigi. *Il Decamerone di messer Giouanni Boccaccio cittadin fiorentino. Di nuouo riformato da Luigi Groto cieco d'Adria ... Et con le dichiarazioni auertimenti, et vn vocabolario fatto da Girolamo Ruscelli*. Venetia: Fabio, & Agostin Zoppini fratelli, & Onofrio Farri compagni, 1590.
- Hausvater, Alexander. "The Decameron: An Entertainment Conceived from Boccaccio." Playwrights Canada, 1982.
- Larramendi, Juan Andosilla. *Cristo Nuestro Señor en la cruz, hallado en los versos del príncipe de nuestros poetas, Garcilasso de la Vega, sacados de diferentes partes y unidos con ley de centones*. Madrid: Luis Sanchez, 1628.
- Malipiero, Girolamo. *Il Petrarca spirituale di Frate Hieronimo Malipiero Venetiano, dell'Ordine de Minori d'Osservanza*. Venezia: gli Heredi di Marchiò Sessa, 1581.
- Marinella, Lucrezia. *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*. Edited and translated by Anne Dunhill, U of Chicago P, 1999.

- Marino, Vincenzo. *Il Furioso spirituale*. Messina: Pietro Brea, 1596.
- Molinet, Jean. *Roman de la Rose moralisé*. Paris: Antoine Vérard, 1500.
- Petrarch, Francesco. *The "Canzoniere," or "Rerum vulgarium fragmenta."* Edited and translated by Mark Musa, Indiana UP, 1996.
- . *Letters of Old Age: Rerum Senilium Libri I-XVIII*. Translated by Aldo S. Bernardo, Saul Levin, and Reta A. Bernardo, Johns Hopkins UP, 1992. 2 vols.
- . *The Secret*. Edited by Carol E. Quillen, Bedford/St. Martins, 2003.
- . *Trionfi*. Edited by Marco Ariani, Mursia, 1988.
- Ponce, Bartolomé. *Primera parte de la Clara Diana a lo divino, repartida en siete libros*. Saragossa: Lorenço de Robles, 1599.
- Il primo Trionfo di m. Francesco Petrarcha trasmutato nella passione del saluator nostro Iesu Christo, con vn sonetto della Madonna*. Modena: Francesco da Urbino, XVI secolo.
- Rabelais, François. *The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Translated by J. M. Cohen, Penguin, 1970.
- Sagliano, Pietro Vincenzo. *Espositione spirituale dell'eccellente poeta m. Pietro Vincenzo Sagliano della citta d'Auersa sopra il Petrarca*. Napoli: Gioseppe Cacchi, 1591.
- Salvatorino, Gian Giacomo. *Tesoro di Sacra Scrittura sopra rime del Petrarcha*. Venezia: Comin da Trino, 1540.
- Salviati, Lionardo. *Il Decameron di messer Giouanni Boccacci, cittadin fiorentino, di nuouo ristampato, e riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi, & alla sua vera*

- lezione ridotto dal caualier Lionardo Saluiati*. Venetia: Filippo & Iacopo Giunti, e fratelli, 1582.
- Scammacca, Ortensio. *L'Orlando Furioso spirituale*. Palermo: Nicolò Buo e Michele Portannuova, 1644.
- Scanello, Cristoforo. *Primo canto dell'Ariosto tradotto in rime spirituali*. Napoli, 1593.
- Selva, Crisippo. *Scelta delle rime amorose di M. Pietro Bembo fatte spirituali*. N.pub., n.d.
- . *Scelta delle rime amorose di Torquato Tasso fatte spirituali*. Modena: Cassiani, 1611.
- Sigismondi, Sigismondo. *Prattica cortigiana morale, et economica, nella quale si discorre minutamente de' Ministri, che seruono in Corte d'un Cardinale, e si dimostrano le qualità, che loro conuengono*. Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, 1604.
- Smiley, Jane. *Ten Days in the Hills*. Knopf, 2007.
- Tarabotti, Arcangela. *Che le donne siano della spezie degli uomini. Women Are No Less Rational Than Men*. Edited by Letizia Panizza, Institute of Romance Studies, 1994.
- Tasso, Torquato. *Aminta: A Pastoral Play*. Translated by Charles Jernigan and Irene Marchegani Jones, Italica Press, 2000.
- . *Gerusalemme conquistata*. Edited by Luigi Bonfigli, G. Laterza, 1934.
- . *Gerusalemme liberata*. Edited by Luca Caretti, Mondadori, 1983.
- . *Giudicio sopra la Gerusalemme riformata*. Edited by Claudio Gigante, Salerno Editrice, 2000.
- Terracina, Laura. *Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti d'Orlando furioso*. Venezia: Giolito, 1549.

Vosnesenskaya, Julia. *The Women's Decameron*. Translated by W. B. Linton, Quartet Books, 1986.

Weldon, Fay. *The Spa Decameron*. Grove Press, 2007.

### Secondary Sources

Alfani, Guido. "The Famine of the 1590s in Northern Italy. An Analysis of the Greatest 'System Shock' of [the] Sixteenth Century." *Histoire & mesure*, vol. XXVI, no. 1, 2011, pp. 17-50.

*Le annotazioni e i discorsi sul 'Decameron' del 1573 dei Deputati fiorentini*. Edited by Giuseppe Chiecchi, Antenore, 2001.

Armstrong, Guyda. "Paratexts and Their Functions in Seventeenth-Century English *Decamerons*." *Modern Language Review*, vol. 102, no. 1, 2007, pp. 40-57.

Baldwin, Peter. *The Copyright Wars: Three Centuries of Trans-Atlantic Battle*. Princeton UP, 2014.

Balingit, Moriah. "School District Weighs Ban of 'Mockingbird,' 'Huckleberry Finn' After Complaint." *Washington Post*, 3 December 2016.

Barolini, Teodolinda. "Notes toward a Gendered History of Italian Literature, with a Discussion of Dante's *Beatrix Loquax*." *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, Fordham UP, 2006, pp. 360-78.

---. "*Le parole son femmine e i fatti sono maschi*: Toward a Sexual Politics of the *Decameron* (*Decameron* II 10)." *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, Fordham UP, 2006, pp. 281-303.

---. "Sociology of the *Brigata*: Gendered Groups in Dante, Forese, Folgore, Boccaccio—

- From 'Guido, i' vorrei' to Griselda." *Italian Studies*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2012, pp. 4-22.
- Battistelli, Franco. "Francesco Dionigi da Fano. Profilo di un letterato tra commedia pastorale e tragedia agiografica." *Fano, Supplemento al Notiziario* 1972, 1973, pp. 21-42.
- Baxter, Catherine. "'Galeotto fu la metafora': Language and sex in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Sexualities, Textualities, Art and Music in Early Modern Italy. Playing with Boundaries*, edited by Melanie L. Marshall, Linda L. Carroll and Katherine A. McIver, Ashgate, 2014, pp. 23-39.
- Best, Myra. "*La peste e le papere*: Textual Repression in Day Four of the *Decameron*." *Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*, edited by Thomas Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki, *Annali d'Italianistica*, 2006, pp. 157-68.
- La Bibliofilia. Rivista dell'arte antica in libri, stampe, manoscritti, autografi e legature*. Directed by Leo S. Olschki, vol. XIII, Olschki, 1912.
- Biblioteca Federiciana: Fano*. Edited by Franco Battistelli, Nardini Editore, 1994.
- Boccaccio e le donne*. 1st ed., edited by Estela González de Sande and Mercedes González de Sande, Aracne, 2014.
- Boccaccio and the European Literary Tradition*. 1st ed, edited by Piero Boitani and Emilia Di Rocco, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2014.
- Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*. Edited by Thomas Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki, *Annali d'Italianistica*, 2006.
- The Book of Saints. A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonized by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & Other Martyrologies*. 4th ed, compiled by the

- Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, MacMillan, 1947.
- Bragantini, Renzo. "The Novella: A Literary Form and Its Readers in Sixteenth-Century Italy." *Annals of Scholarship*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1989, pp. 57-73.
- . "Su alcune edizioni cinquecentesche del *Decameron*." *I dintorni del testo: approcci alle periferie del libro. Atti del convegno internazionale, Roma 15–17 novembre 2004, Bologna 18–19 novembre 2004*, vol. 1, edited by Marco Santoro and Maria Gioia Tavoni, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2005, pp. 343-48.
- Branca, Vittore. *Boccaccio Medievale*. Sansoni, 1975.
- . "The Epic of the Italian Merchant." *Critical Perspectives on the Decameron*, edited by Robert S. Dombrowski, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, pp. 38-47.
- Brera, Matteo. *Novecento all'Indice: Gabriele D'Annunzio, i libri proibiti e i rapporti Stato-Chiesa all'ombra del Concordato*. Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2016.
- Calabrese, Michael. "Male Piety and Sexuality in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2003, pp. 257-76.
- . "Men and Sex in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Medievalia et Humanistica*, vol. 28, 2002, pp. 45-72.
- Caravale, Giorgio. "Illiterates and Church Censorship in Late Renaissance Italy." *Lectura y culpa en el siglo XVI (Reading and Guilt in the 16th Century)*, edited by María José Vega and Iveta Nakládlová, Studia Aurea Monográfica, 2012, pp. 93-106.
- Castiglia, Ignazio. *Il labirinto d'amore: Istanze morali e ragioni artistiche nel 'Corbaccio' di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 2011.
- Catelli, Nicola. "Parodiae libertas." *Sulla parodia italiana nel Cinquecento*. FrancoAngeli, 2011.

- Cavallo, Jo Ann. *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure*. U of Toronto P, 2004.
- Cerisola, Pier Luigi. "La questione della cornice del *Decameron*." *Aevum*, vol. 49, 1975, pp. 137-56.
- Cervigni, Dino S. "The *Decameron*'s Ballads and Emilia's Happy Song." *Annali d'Italianistica*, vol. 31, 2013, pp. 131-71.
- . "Fiammetta's Song of Jealousy: Are the Young People Still at Play?" *Annali d'Italianistica*, vol. 31, 2013, pp. 459-507.
- Cherchi, Paolo. "Il 'Decamerone Spirituale' di Francesco Dionigi da Fano." *Studi sul Boccaccio*, vol. 12, 1980, pp. 321-28.
- Chiecchi, Giuseppe, and Luciano Troisio. *Il Decameron sequestrato: Le tre edizioni censurate nel Cinquecento*. Edizioni Unicopli, 1984.
- Church, *Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Edited by Gigliola Fragnito, translated by Adrian Belton, Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Clubb, Louise George. "Boccaccio and the Boundaries of Love." *Italica*, vol. 37, 1960, pp. 188-96.
- Cox, Virginia. *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2013.
- . *The Prodigious Muse: Women's Writing in Post-Reformation Italy*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2011.
- . *A Short History of the Italian Renaissance*. I. B. Tauris, 2015.
- Croft, Claire M. "Pygmalion and the Metamorphosis of Meaning in Jean Molinet's *Roman de la Rose moralisé*." *French Studies*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2005, pp. 453-66.

- Daniels, Rhiannon. *Boccaccio and the Book: Production and Reading in Italy 1340–1520*. Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2009.
- . “Materiality and Marginalia in Renaissance Editions of the *Decameron*.” *Caro Vitto: Essays in Memory of Vittore Branca*, vol. 2, no. 27, edited by Jill Kraye and Laura Lepschy, *The Italianist*, Special Supplement, 2007, pp. 86-100.
- The Decameron: A New Translation: 21 Novelle, Contemporary Reactions, Modern Criticism*. Edited by Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, Norton, 1977.
- “DecameronWeb.” Edited by Massimo Riva and Michael Papio.
- < [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/index.php](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/index.php)>.
- Deligiorgis, Stavros. *Narrative Intellection in the Decameron*. U of Iowa P, 1975.
- Delpiano, Patrizia. *Il governo della lettura. Chiesa e libri nell’Italia del Settecento*. Il Mulino, 2008.
- Dillon, John M. *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. Cornell UP, 1996.
- Di Sisto, Laura. “Boccaccio Friend or Foe? An Examination of the Role of Women in the *Decameron*.” *Spunti e ricerche*, vol. 10, 1994, pp. 63-75.
- Eisner, Martin. *Boccaccio and the Invention of Italian Literature: Dante, Petrarch, Cavalcanti, and the Authority of the Vernacular*. Cambridge UP, 2013.
- Enciclopedia dei Santi (Bibliotheca Sanctorum)*. Città Nuova, 2013.
- Faini, Marco. “La poetica dell’epica sacra tra Cinque e Seicento in Italia.” *The Italianist*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2015, pp. 27-60.
- Falcioni, Anna. “La condizione della donna a Fano: Proposte per un’indagine storica.” *Le donne a Fano. Documenti d’archivio dal XIV al XX secolo. Proposte per un’indagine storica*, edited by Giuseppina Boiani Tombari and Sonia Ferri,



- Archivio di Stato di Pesaro, 1992, pp. 1-16.
- Falck, Robert. "Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification." *The Music Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1979, pp. 1-21.
- Ferrante, Joan M. "The Frame Characters of the *Decameron*: A Progression of Virtues." *Romance Philology*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1965, pp. 212-26.
- Fido, Franco. *Il regime delle simmetrie imperfette. Studi sul 'Decameron.'* FrancoAngeli, 1988.
- Finucci, Valeria. *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto.* Stanford UP, 1992.
- Fleming, Ray. "Happy Endings? Resisting Women and the Economy of Love in Day Five of Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Italica*, vol. 70, 1993, pp. 30-45.
- Fraglione, Gigliola. *La Bibbia al rogo: La censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della Scrittura (1471-1605).* Il Mulino, 1997.
- Frajese, Vittorio. "Note su Machiavelli: editoria e cultura nell'Italia del Rinascimento e della Controriforma." *Studi Storici*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1997, pp. 135-55.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Theme of the Three Caskets." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, edited by James Strachey, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1958, pp. 289-302.
- Fucilla, Joseph G. "The Pedigree of a *soneto a lo divino*." *Comparative Literature*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1949, pp. 267-71.
- Gaunt, Simon. *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature.* Cambridge UP, 1995.

- Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*. Edited by Catherine M. Mooney, U of Pennsylvania P, 1999.
- Getto, Giovanni. *Vita di forme e forme di vita nel Decameron*. Petrini, 1972.
- Gibbons, James. *The Roman Martyrology*. J. Murphy Co., 1916.
- Gigante, Claudio. 'Vincer pariemi più sé stessa antica.' *La Gerusalemme conquistata nel mondo poetico di Torquato Tasso*. Bibliopolis, 1996.
- Gilmore, David D. *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. Yale UP, 1990.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*. Translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi, Johns Hopkins UP, 2013.
- Gioè, Adriano. *Filosofi medioplatonici del II secolo d.C.: testimonianze e frammenti: Gaio, Albino, Lucio, Nicostrato, Tauro, Severo, Arpocrasione*. Bibliopolis, 2003.
- Gittes, Tobias Foster. "Boccaccio's 'Valley of Women': Fetishised Foreplay in *Decameron* VI." *Italica*, vol. 76, 1999, pp. 147-74.
- Goodich, Michael. *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century*. A. Hiersemann, 1982.
- Goodwin, Amy W. "The Griselda Game." *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2004, pp. 41-69.
- Gould, Josiah B. *The Philosophy of Chrysippus*. State U of New York P, 1970.
- Graf, Arturo. *Attraverso il Cinquecento*. E. Loescher, 1888.
- Graves, Robert. *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*. Carcanet, 1997.
- Green, Reina. "Eroticizing Virtue: The Role of Cleopatra in Early Modern Drama."

*Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, edited by Susan Shifrin, Ashgate, 2002, pp. 93-103.

Grossi, Joseph. "Anti-Petrarchism in the *Decameron's Proem* and *Introduction*?"

*Quaderni d'italianistica*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2012, pp. 5-25.

Gualtieri, Teresa. "Birds of Prey and the Sport of Falconry in Italian Literature through the Fourteenth Century: from Serving Love to Served for Dinner." Diss. U of Wisconsin, Madison, 2005.

Guglielmino, Salvatore, and Hermann Grosser. *Il sistema letterario. Storia. Per le Scuole*, vol. 2, *Dal Cinquecento al primo Ottocento*. Principato, 2001.

Güntert, Georges. "Dalla 'Gerusalemme liberata' alla 'Conquistata': Racconto di nobili imprese e allegoria del 'contemptus mundi.'" *Italianistica: Rivista di Letteratura Italiana*, vol. 24, no. 2/3, 1995, pp. 381-94.

Hagedorn, Suzanne C. "Abandoned Women and the Dynamics of Reader Response:

Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione* and *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*." *Abandoned Women: Rewriting the Classics in Dante, Boccaccio and Chaucer*, U of Michigan P, 2004, pp. 102-29.

Halsall, Paul. "Modern History Sourcebook: Index Librorum Prohibitorum, 1557–1966 [Index of Prohibited Books]." *Internet History Sourcebooks*, Fordham University, 1998. <<http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/indexlibrorum.asp>>.

*The Harvard College Library Department of Printing and Graphic Arts Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts. Part II: Italian 16th Century Books, Volume II*, compiled by Ruth Mortimer, The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1974.

- Hauvette, Henri. *Boccace: Étude biographique et littéraire*. A. Colin, 1914.
- Havely, Nicholas. "Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Friars." *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, edited by Piero Boitani, Cambridge UP, 1983, pp. 249-68.
- Haym, Niccola Francesco. *Biblioteca italiana, ossia notizia de' libri rari italiani divisa in quattro parti cioè istoria, poesia, prose, arti e scienze già comp. da Niccola Francesco Haym. Ed. cor., ampliata, e di giudizi intorno alle migliori opere arricchita. Con tavole copiosissime e necessarie*. Milano: G. Silvestri, 1803.
- Heffernan, Thomas J. *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages*. Oxford UP, 1988.
- Higman, Francis M. *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551*. Librairie Droz S.A., 1979.
- Hollander, Robert. *Boccaccio's Last Fiction: "Il Corbaccio"*. U of Pennsylvania P, 1988.
- Holy Bible, King James Version*. Holman Bible Publishers, 2010.
- Index des Livres Interdits IX* ("Index de Rome: 1590, 1593, 1596"). Edited by J. M. de Bujanda et al., Centre des Études de la Renaissance, 1994.
- In Dialogue with the Other Voice in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Literary and Social Contexts for Women's Writing*. Edited by Julie D. Campbell and Maria Galli Stampino, Iter Inc., 2011.
- Jacobson, David. *Of Virgins and Martyrs: Women and Sexuality in Global Conflict*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2013.
- Janssens, Marcel. "The Internal Reception of the Stories within the *Decameron*."

- Boccaccio in Europe: Proceedings of the Boccaccio Conference, Louvain, December 1975*, edited by Gilbert Tournoy, Leuven UP, 1977, pp. 135-48.
- “Le Jeu des échecs moralisé (The Moralized Game of Chess), University of Chicago Library MS 392.” University of Chicago Library, n.d.  
 <<http://roseandchess.lib.uchicago.edu/chess.html>>.
- Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*. U of Chicago P, 1998.
- . *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates*. Chicago UP, 2009.
- Kelso, Ruth. *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*. U of Illinois P, 1956.
- Kinser, Samuel. *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext*. U of California P, 1990.
- Kirkham, Victoria. “An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*.” *Italica*, vol. 62, no. 1, 1985, pp. 1-23.
- . “The Apocryphal Boccaccio.” *Mediaevalia*, vol. 34, 2013, pp. 169-220.
- . “Boccaccio’s Dedication to Women in Love.” *Renaissance Studies in Honour of Craig Hugh Smyth*, edited by A. Morrogh et al., Giunti Barbèra, 1985, pp. 333-43.
- . *Fabulous Vernacular: Boccaccio’s Filocolo and the Art of Medieval Fiction*. U of Michigan P, 2001.
- . *The Sign of Reason in Boccaccio’s Fiction*. Olschki, 1993.
- Koldau, Linda Maria, and Anna Ficarella. “‘Non sit quid volo sed fiat quod tibi placet’: I ‘contrafacta’ sacri del ‘Lamento d’Arianna’ di Claudio Monteverdi.” *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2001, pp. 281-314.
- Koldau, Linda Maria. *Die venezianische Kirchenmusik von Claudio Monteverdi*. Bärenreiter, 2005.

- Kuhns, Richard. *Decameron and the Philosophy of Storytelling: Author as Midwife and Pimp*. Columbia UP, 2005.
- Lacroix, Jean. "L'offrande musicale' du onzième récit ou la 'fin' des journées du Décaméron." *Et c'est la fin pour quoi sommes ensemble: Hommage à Jean Dufournet*, vol. 2, Honoré Champion, 1993, pp. 827-37. 2 vols.
- Leon, Mechele. "The Poet and the Prince: Revising Molière and *Tartuffe* in the French Revolution." *French Historical Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2005, pp. 447-65.
- Levenstein, Jessica. "Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Italica*, vol. 73, no. 3, 1996, pp. 313-35.
- "La letteratura al bando." *Libri proibiti. Stampa e censura nel Cinquecento*. Biblioteca Panizzi, n.d. <<http://panizzi.comune.re.it/Sezione.jsp?titolo=La+letteratura+al+bando&idSezione=109>>.
- The Literary and Cultural Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe*. Edited by Thomas F. Glick and Elinor Shaffer, Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Longoni, Franco. "Una cinquecentina fanese misconosciuta." *Nuovi studi fanesi*, no. 21, 2007, pp. 219-25.
- Lowden, John. *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées*. Pennsylvania State UP, 2000.
- Lowes, John Livingston. "Chaucer and the *Ovide moralisé*." *PMLA*, vol. 33, no. 2, 1918, pp. 302-25.
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard. *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature*. Stanford UP, 1996.
- Luzzi, Cecilia. "Censura e rinnovamento cattolico nell'età della Controriforma: i travestimenti spirituali del Petrarca e il madrigale." *Atti del congresso*

- internazionale di musica sacra, Roma, 2011*, edited by F. Luisi and A. Addamiano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013, pp. 331-39.
- Maino, Paolo Maria Gilberto. *La lingua della rassettatura del Decameron di Lionardo Salviati*. Diss. Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2013.
- The Making of Masculinities: The Men's Studies*. Edited by Harry Brod, Allen & Unwin, 1987.
- Marchesi, Simone. "Dire la verità dei sogni: la teoria di Panfilo in *Decameron* IV.6." *Italica*, vol. 81, no. 2, 2004, pp. 170-83.
- . *Stratigrafie Decameroniane*. Olschki, 2004.
- Marcus, Millicent. *An Allegory of Form: Literary Self-Consciousness in the Decameron*. Stanford French and Italian Studies XVIII, ANMA Libri, 1979.
- . "Boccaccio and the Seventh Art: The Decameronian Films of Fellini, De Laurentiis, Pasolini, Woody Allen." *Mediaevalia*, vol. 34, 2013, pp. 267-79.
- . "Misogyny as Misreading: A Gloss on *Decameron* VIII, 7." *Stanford Italian Review*, vol. 4, 1984, pp. 23-40.
- Mazzotta, Giuseppe. "The *Decameron*: The Literal and the Allegorical." *Italian Quarterly*, vol. 18, 1975, pp. 53-73.
- . *The World at Play in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Princeton UP, 1986.
- Mazzotti, José Antonio. "Garcilaso en el Inca Garcilaso: los alcances de un nombre." *Lexis: Revista de lingüística y literatura*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2005, pp. 179-218.
- McTighe, Neal. "Generating Feminine Discourse in Boccaccio's *Decameron*: The 'Valle delle Donne' as Julia Kristeva's *Chora*." *Romance Notes*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2006, 41-48.

- Medieval Latin*. 2nd ed., edited by K. P. Harrington, U of Chicago P, 1997.
- Miguel, Marilyn. *The Ethical Dimension of the Decameron*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2015.
- . *A Rhetoric of the Decameron*. U of Toronto P, 2003.
- Milman, Henry Hart. *History of Latin Christianity: Including that of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicolas V*, vol. 2, John Murray, 1854.
- Monfasani, John. "The First Call for Press Censorship: Niccolò Perotti, Giovanni Andrea Bussi, Antonio Moreto, and the Editing of Pliny's Natural History." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1988, pp. 1-31.
- Navarrete, Ignacio. *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance*. U of California P, 1994.
- Nuova Crestomazia italiana per le scuole secondarie*. Compiled by Carlo Maria Tallarigo and Vittorio Imbriani, Naples: Vincenzo Morano, 1886.
- Olson, Kristina. "The Language of Women as Written by Men: Boccaccio, Dante and Gendered Histories of the Vernacular." *Heliotropia*, vol. 8-9, 2011-12, pp. 51-78.
- Online Etymology Dictionary*. Compiled by Douglas Harper, 2001-2017.  
<[www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)>
- Opere di Francesco Berni e dei berneschi*. Edited by Giorgio Bárberi Squarotti and Moreno Savoretti, Utet Grandi Opere, 2014.
- Paden, Michael. "Elissa: La Ghibellina del 'Decameron.'" *Studi sul Boccaccio*, vol. 21, 1993, pp. 139-50.
- Padoan, Giorgio. "Sulla genesi e la pubblicazione del *Decameron*." *Il Boccaccio, le Muse, il Parnaso e l'Arno*, edited by Giorgio Padoan, Olschki, 1978, pp. 93-121.



Paolucci, Riccardo. "La cappella musicale del duomo di Fano: Appunti per una storia."

*Note d'archivio per la storia musicale*, anno III, no. 2-3, 1926, pp. 81ff.

Paschini, Pio. "Letterati ed indice nella Riforma cattolica in Italia." *Cinquecento romano*

*e Riforma cattolica*, Lateran UP, 1958, pp. 237-73.

*The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*. 3rd ed., edited by Donald Attwater and Catherine

Rachel John, Penguin Books, 1995.

*Per violate forme. Rappresentazioni e linguaggi della violenza nella letteratura italiana*.

Edited by Fabrizio Bondi and Nicola Catelli, Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 2009.

Pierno, Franco. "Il modello linguistico decameroniano e il suo rapporto con il volgare nel

pensiero di Antonio Brucioli." *Cahiers d'études italiennes*, vol. 8, 2008, pp. 99-

114.

Piumati, Alessandro. *La vita e le opere di Torquato Tasso: notizie ad uso delle scuole*

*secondarie*. Torino: Ditta G. B. Paravia, 1891.

Potter, Joy. *Five Frames for the Decameron*. Princeton UP, 1982.

---. "Woman in the *Decameron*." *Studies in the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Memory of*

*Arnolfo B. Ferruolo*, edited by G. P. Biasin, A. N. Mancini, and N. J. Perella,

Società Editrice Napoletana, 1985, pp. 87-103.

Price, Leah. *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot*.

Cambridge UP, 2000.

Psaki, F. Regina. "'Alcuna paroletta più liberale': Contemporary Women Authors

Address the *Decameron's* Obscenity." *Medievalia*, vol. 34, 2013, pp. 241-66.

---. "Boccaccio and Female Sexuality: Gendered and Eroticized Landscapes." *The Flight*

*of Ulysses: Studies in Memory of Emmanuel Hatzantonis*, edited by Augustus A.

- Mastri, Annali d'Italianistica, 1977, pp. 125-34.
- . "Giving them the Bird: Figurative Language and the 'Woman Question' in the *Decameron* and the *Corbaccio*." *Studi sul Boccaccio*, vol. 41, 2013, pp. 207-37.
- . "'Women Make All Things Lose Their Power': Women's Knowledge, Men's Fear in the *Decameron* and the *Corbaccio*." *Heliotropia*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp. 33-48.
- Puglisi, Carmen. "Fra passione umana e divina: il *Furioso* spiritualizzato di Vincenzo Marino." *In nobili civitate Messanae: Contributi alla storia dell'editoria e della circolazione del libro antico in Sicilia: Seminario di studi, Montalbano Elicona, 27-28 maggio 2011*, edited by Giuseppe Lipari, Università degli Studi di Messina, Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, 2013, pp. 287-99.
- Quondam, Amedeo. "Note sulla tradizione della poesia spirituale e religiosa (parte prima)." *Paradigmi e tradizioni*, edited by Amedeo Quondam, Bulzoni, 2005, pp. 127-211.
- . "Riscrittura, citazione e parodia. Il 'Petrarca spirituale' di Girolamo Malipiero." *Il naso di Laura: lingua e poesia lirica nella tradizione del classicismo*, Mucchi, 1991, pp. 203-62.
- Randall, Michael. "The Fountain of Life in Molinet's *Roman de la rose moralisé* (1500)." *Image and Incarnation: The Early Modern Doctrine of the Pictorial Image*, edited by Walter S. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel, Brill, 2015, pp. 313-37.
- Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*. Edited by Valeria Finucci, Duke UP, 1999.
- Richardson, Brian. "Editing the *Decameron* in the Sixteenth Century." *Italian Studies*, vol. 45, 1990, pp. 13-31.

- . "Inscribed Meanings: Authorial Self-Fashioning and Readers' Annotations in Sixteenth-Century Italian Printed Books." *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, vol. 8, edited by Ian F. Moulton, Brepols, 2004, pp. 85-104.
- . *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge UP, 1999.
- . "The Textual History of the *Decameron*." *Boccaccio: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, edited by Victoria Kirkham, Michael Sherberg, and Janet Levarie Smarr, U of Chicago P, 2013, pp. 41-49.
- . "Transformations of a Text: Boccaccio's *Decameron* from Manuscript to Print and Beyond." *ISGL-Bulletin*, no. 9, 2010, pp. 5-18.
- Rime sacre dal Petrarca al Tasso*. Edited by Maria Luisa Doglio and Carlo Delcorno, Il Mulino, 2005.
- Rime sacre tra Cinquecento e Seicento*. Edited by Maria Luisa Doglio and Carlo Delcorno, Il Mulino, 2007.
- Rizzo, Silvia. *Il lessico filologico degli umanisti*. Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973.
- Roaf, Cristina. "The Presentation of the *Decameron* in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century with Special Reference to the Work of Francesco Sansovino." *The Languages of Literature in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Peter Hainsworth, Valerio Lucchesi, et al., Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 109-21.
- Robin, Diana Maury. *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*. U of Chicago P, 2007.
- Romei, Danilo. "L'Orlando moralizzato dal Berni." Danilo Romei and Massimiliano Mancini, *Da Leone X a Clemente VII: Scrittori toscani nella Roma dei papati*

- medicei (1513–1534)*, Vecchiarelli, 2007, pp. 181-201.
- Roush, Sherry. *Speaking Spirits: Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy*. U of Toronto P, 2015.
- Rozzo, Ugo. "Italian Literature on the Index." *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Gigliola Fragnito, Cambridge UP, 2001, pp. 194-222.
- Ruggiero, Guido. *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*. Oxford UP, 1985.
- Russell, Norman. *Cyril of Alexandria*. Routledge, 2000.
- Saints and She-Devils: Images of Women in the 15th and 16th Centuries*. Edited and compiled by Lène Dresen Coenders et al., Rubicon Press, 1987.
- Sanguineti, Federico. "La Novelletta delle papere nel *Decameron*." *Belfagor*, vol. 37, 1982, pp. 137-46.
- Sasso, Luigi. "L'interpretatio nominis in Boccaccio." *Studi sul Boccaccio*, vol. 12, 1980, pp. 129-74.
- Segre, Cesare. "Perché Gualtieri di Saluzzo odiava le donne?" *Dai metodi ai testi: Varianti, personaggi, narrazioni*, Nino Aragno, 2008, pp. 287-94.
- Selvidge, Marla J. *Woman, Violence, and the Bible*. E. Mellen Press, 1996.
- Serassi, Pierantonio. *La Vita di Torquato Tasso*. Roma: nella Stamperia Pagliarini, 1785.
- Sherberg, Michael. *The Governance of Friendship: Law and Gender in the Decameron*. The Ohio State UP, 2011.
- . "The Patriarch's Pleasure and the Frametale Crisis: *Decameron* IV-V." *Romance Quarterly*, vol. 38, 1991, pp. 227-38.
- Smarr, Janet Levarie. *Boccaccio and Fiammetta: The Narrator as Lover*. U of Illinois P,

1986.

Solerti, Angelo. *Vita di Torquato Tasso*. Loescher, 1895. 3 vols.

Sorrentino, Andrea. *La letteratura italiana e il Sant'Uffizio*. Francesco Perella S.A., 1935.

Sottili, Agostino. "Letteratura e riforma in Italia nel Cinquecento." *Romanische Forschungen*, vol. 85, 1973, pp. 78-95.

Steadman, John M. "Perseus Upon Pegasus and *Ovid Moralized*." *Review of English Studies*, vol. 9, no. 36, 1958, pp. 407-10.

*Gli Studi in Italia. Anno III, Vol. 1: Periodo didattico scientifico e letterario*. Roma: Tipografia della Pace, 1880.

Surdich, Luigi. "Il 'Decameron': La cornice e altri luoghi dell'ideologia del Boccaccio." *La cornice di amore. Studi sul Boccaccio*, ETS Editrice, 1987, pp. 225-83.

---. "Tradizione, riuso e modificazione della metafora erotica nella novellistica postdecameroniana." *InVerbis*, vol. 2, 2011, pp. 23-52.

Suzuki, Mihoko. "Gender, Power, and the Female Reader: Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*." *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1993, pp. 231-52.

Terrizzi, Anthony. "The Rubrics of the *Decameron*." *The DecameronWeb*. Adapted from D'Andrea, Antonio, "Le rubriche del *Decameron*," *Yearbook of Italian Studies*, 1973-75, pp. 41-67.

<[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/literature/narratology/rubrics.php](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/literature/narratology/rubrics.php)>.

"*Tra mille carte vive ancora*." *Ricezione del Furioso tra immagini e parole*. Edited by

- Lina Bolzoni, Serena Pezzini and Giovanna Rizzarelli, Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 2010.
- Traversari, Guido. *Bibliographia boccaccesca. I: Scritti intorno a Boccaccio e alla fortuna delle sue opere*. B. Franklin, 1973.
- Trovato, Paolo. *Con ogni diligenza corretto. La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470–1570)*. Il Mulino, 1991.
- Usher, Jonathan. “Boccaccio on Readers and Reading.” *Heliotropia*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp. 63-85.
- . “Frame and Novella Gardens in the *Decameron*.” *Medium Aevum*, vol. 58, no. 2, 1989, pp. 274-85.
- Vandenbroucke, François. *La spiritualità del Medioevo (XII–XVI secolo). Nuovi ambienti e problemi*, vol. 4/B, edited by Réginald Grégoire and Giovanna della Croce, Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 1991.
- Vecchiotti, Filippo. *Biblioteca Picena, o sia Notizie Istoriche delle opere e degli scrittori Piceni*. Osimo: presso Domenico Quercetti, 1795. 4 vols.
- Vergili, Antonio. *Francesco Berni, con documenti inediti*. Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1881.
- Visibile Teologia. Il libro sacro figurato in Italia tra Cinquecento e Seicento*. Edited by Erminia Ardissino and Elisabetta Selmi, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2012.
- Wardropper, Bruce W. *Historia de la poesia lirica a lo divino en la cristiandad occidental*. Revista de Occidente, 1958.
- Winstead, Karen A. *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England*. Cornell UP, 1997.

Witcombe, Christopher L. C. E. *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome*. Brill, 2004.

*Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*. Edited by Alcuin Blamires, Clarendon, 1992.

*"Women Are Not Human": An Anonymous Treatise and Responses*. Edited and translated by Theresa M. Kenney, Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.

*Women Saints in World Religions*. Edited by Arvind Sharma, State U of New York P, 2000.

Woolf, Rosemary. *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*. Clarendon, 1968.

Zaczek, Barbara. "Creating and Recreating Reality with Words: *The Decameron* and *The Women's Decameron*." *Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*, edited by Thomas C. Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki, vol. 8, *Annali d'Italianistica*, 2006, pp. 235-48.

Zago, Esther. "Women, Medicine, and the Law in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Women Healers and Physicians: Climbing a Long Hill*, edited by Lilian R. Furst, UP of Kentucky, 1997, pp. 64-78.

## Curriculum vitae et studiorum

**Alyssa M. Falcone**

alyssa.falcone@gmail.com

---

### EDUCATION

2017: Ph.D., Italian Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Dissertation: “*Decamerons Without Women: The Spiritualization of Italian Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*”

Supervisors: Walter Stephens, Christopher Celenza.

2011: M.A., Italian Studies, Boston College

Thesis: “La morte e l’individuo: un’analisi dello sviluppo

dell’individualismo da Dante a Boccaccio.” Supervisor: Laurie Shepard.

2009: B.A., Italian Cultural History & Language, Gettysburg College

Thesis: “Mussolini’s (Failed) Revival of Ancient Rome in Contemporary Italy.” Supervisor: Alan Perry.

### PUBLICATION HISTORY

Review: “Barbara Torelli-Benedetti, *Partenia: A Pastoral Play*, ed. and trans. Lisa Sampson and Barbara Burgess-Van Aken,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* XLV.4 (2014): 1063-65.

Review: “Marilyn Migiel, *The Ethical Dimension of the Decameron*,” *Modern Language Notes* 132.1 (2017): 244-46.

### RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Editorial practices of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; Boccaccio’s *Decameron*; Italian Renaissance Humanism; authorship, copyright, and plagiarism; gender and sexuality in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy; literary forgeries; censorship and moralization of texts; Italian-American Culture; 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italian poetry, literature, and cinema.

### FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2016: Dean’s Teaching Fellowship Recipient, Johns Hopkins University



2016: Singleton Center Summer Research Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University  
2014: Visiting Research Scholar, Oxford University  
2012: Summer Research Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University  
2011-2017: Gilman Graduate Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University  
2009-2011: Teaching Fellowship, Boston College  
2008: Gamma Kappa Alpha membership, Gettysburg College

## CONFERENCE PAPERS

“Boccaccio Spirituale: Overhauling the *Decameron* in the Name of Religion.” *American Boccaccio Association Conference*, Duke University, 30 Sept.-2 Oct., 2016.

“Boccaccian Economies: Merchants in and Merchants of the *Decameron*.” *Renaissance Society of America Conference*, Berlin, Germany, 26-28 March 2015.

“‘Women’s Lib’ and Feminine Therapies: Storytelling as Prophylaxis for Female Readers of the *Decameron*?” *Therapeutic Genres of Art and Literature in Early Modern Europe, 1350–1700*, Graduate Seminar and Collaborative Research Project with Johns Hopkins and Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany, 23-24 March 2015.

“Becoming Boccaccio: Marketing the *Decameron* in the 16th Century.” *Sixteenth Century Society and Conference*, New Orleans, LA, 16-19 October 2014.

“*La rappresentazione della assumptione della madona and Historia per modo di Comedia intitolata el sponsalio di Isahac*.” *Renaissance Society of America Conference*, New York, NY, 27-29 March 2014.

“The Aldine *Decameron* of 1522, ‘nuovamente stampato con tre novelle aggiunte’: An Analysis of the Three *Novelle* Falsely Attributed to Boccaccio in the 16th Century.” *Sixteenth Century Society and Conference*, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 24-27 October 2013.

“Il culto della femmina divina: Visioni di Diana, Venere, e Maria Vergine nelle opere minori di Boccaccio.” *Rebirth, Regeneration and Re-emergence: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Conference in Romance Studies*, Boston College, 17 March 2012.

“La morte e l’individuo: Un’analisi dello sviluppo dell’individualismo fra Dante e Boccaccio.” *Crossing Over: 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Conference in Romance Studies*, Boston College, 19 March 2011.

“La morte amorosa e l’amore fatale: Gli opposti visti da Leopardi.” *It’s Complicated: A Clash of Perspectives: 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Conference in Romance Studies*, Boston College, 20 March 2010.

## **CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION & RELATED ACTIVITY**

Co-organizer, Graduate Conference “VERSUS: Antagonism, Self-Criticism and Hostility in Literature and Art,” Department of German & Romance Languages & Literatures, Johns Hopkins University, September 2016.

Co-organizer, Graduate Conference “Crossing Over,” Department of Romance Languages & Literatures, Boston College, March 2011.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE (videos available upon request)**

### Johns Hopkins University (2011-Present)

The Italian-American Experience: From the Margins to the Mainstream: Fall 2016

Intermediate Italian II: Spring 2016, Spring 2014

Intermediate Italian I: Fall 2015, Fall 2013

Italian-American Culture: Winter 2014

Italian Elements II: Spring 2017, Spring 2013, Spring 2012

Italian Elements I: Winter 2013, Fall 2012, Fall 2011

### Boston College (2009-2011)

Elementary Italian II: Spring 2011, Spring 2010

Elementary Italian I: Fall 2010, Fall 2009

## **COURSES DESIGNED & PLANNED (syllabi available upon request)**

“The Italian-American Experience” (upper-level undergraduate)

“Italian-American Culture” (lower-level undergraduate, condensed Intersession course)

“Madness and Trauma in Modern Italian Literature” (lower-level undergraduate)

“The Black Death in Italian Literature and Art” (upper- or lower-level undergraduate)

“Survey of Italian Literature” (lower-level undergraduate)

“Dante: The Man, the Pilgrim, the Poet” (lower-level undergraduate)

## **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

Johns Hopkins University (2011-Present)

Editorial Assistant to Chris Celenza, 2017

President, GRLL Graduate Student Forum, 2015-16

Editorial Assistant to Walter Stephens, 2015

Graduate Student Representative, Italian Section, 2013-14

Editorial Assistant, *Modern Language Notes* Italian Issues 129.1 and 130.1, 2014-15

## **LANGUAGES**

English (native)

Italian (fluent)

French (reading proficiency)

Latin (reading proficiency)

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Boccaccio Association

Gamma Kappa Alpha

Modern Language Association

National Organization of Italian American Women

Renaissance Society of America

Sixteenth Century Society

## **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**